



R. A. LAFFERTY

The Flame is Green



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MAN WITH THE SPANISH EYES

The Back Doors of the World are three bays in southwestern Ireland, all contained within the span of a little less than fifty miles.

These are Dingle Bay which extends from Dunmore Head (once the most westward place in the world, still the most westward place in the Old World) to Bray Head; which lies between the Connor Hills and the Iuerach Mountains; which is fed by the River Maine; and whose towns are Dingle, Anascaul, and Castlemaine. The waters of Dingle Bay are gray and silver.

And Kenmare Bay which extends from Bolus Head to Dursey Head; which lies between the Iuerach Mountains and the Cloonee Hills; which is fed by the Kenmare River; and whose towns are Dromare Castle and Kenmare. The waters of Kenmare Bay are blue and white.

And Bantry Bay which extends from Dursey Head to Three Castle Head; which lies between the land of the Cloonee Hills and that of the Skibbereens; which is fed by no river at all but only by three streams; and whose towns are Castletown, Glengarriff, and Bantry. The waters of Bantry Bay are green and gold.

These Bays were the Back Doors of the World when this region was truly the Back of the Whole World. When the ledgendes of the Far Land were made, this was the Far Land. The Bays were the Back Doors of the World again and again in later times when they held illicit commerce with outlaw lands: with the rampant Scandinavias when the Viking commerce was a going thing, with Iberia when it was still Arab, with the African hump in a context that is nearly forgotten. And the Bays were the Back Doors again during the Slave Centuries of Ireland when these bays gave some contact with the free or partially free regions of the world.

America was discovered, early and often, from each of these three bays. Hy-Brasil was discovered from them, and China, and St. Brandon's Land.

The southernmost of the three, Bantry Bay or Spanish Bay, was in no way distinguished. Its westernmost point fell nine miles short of ever being the Westernmost Point of the World. Its hills were more tangled than those of the other bays, its upland farms were more rocky, its channels were more treacherous and less navigable. The potatoes and oats were poorer in the hills around Bantry, the cattle were runtier, the horses were smaller and less noble (though it was said that they were more intelligent, which cannot be proved).

But the fishing was better in Bantry, and its fish-men and boat-men were better than in any of the other bays, better than anywhere else in the world. And of the superb Bantry boat-men there was one who stood supreme.

This best fish-man and boat-man in the world was on Bantry Bay now, and his home was on the Castletown part of the bay. His name was Dana Coscuin. He was fishing now, but not for fish. He was fishing by handing himself down a weighted line and prowling old wrecks. What things he brought up, he hid in the trout; for Dana always caught his boat-load of trout first. Due to its treacherous channels, there were many more wrecks in Bantry Bay than in the other bays.

Dana was worried this morning, for a thing had slid past him. He could track on water as another man with dogs could track on land. He could sense and analyze the wake of anything that passed, and he always knew what boats and ships were in the bay. But one had slipped passed him as if he had been morning-dreaming, and this had not happened before. It had come in as if veiled, it had created its own morning mist, it had gone by Dana, and it was somewhere at anchor in an inner cove.

There had to be something special about this veiled ship. When a ship is invisible, even for a brief time, to the best of all sea-eyes, then there are more things than one strange about that ship. "At least it will not go without my knowing it," Dana said. "I will be on it when it goes, but will I want to be on it?"

Dana, whose name may mean 'The Bold,' or 'The Dane' (perhaps it is another form of the name 'Donncha,' someone had once suggested; "No, it isn't," Dana had insisted), was a ruddy and tow-headed, stocky and swift young man. He was greeneyed and grinning. He had this grin always: often it was friendly, and less often it was frightening. He was nearer to twenty than to twenty-five years old, but there is no way to come closer to it than that. He came up the weighted line now, and into his boat again. Then he saw, or he felt, a man on shore. And the shore was a mile away. The man had not moved down the shore or up the shore. He was

simply there, and he hadn't been there a short time before.

And there was another man coming behind Dana, crouching very low on a small boat that was nearly awash. He seemed to walk on water, this man. But Dana's grin was deep and friendly for the stealthy man behind. This was Mikey Moloney of the Bay who often tried to slip up on the sharp-sensing Dana.

"Hullo, Mikey," Dana laughed without turning. "Other things are slipping up on me this morning, but Mikey Moloney will never slip up on me. He can barely slip up on the fish and hook them into his boat before they see him, and only the old and deaf fish can he do this to. Where is the strange boat in the bay, Mikey?"

"There are no strange boats to a man's eyes, only to a boy's, Dana," Mikey said. "Only one ship has come in this morning, while you nodded like a noddy. It's a Scandinavian ship such as you have seen dozens of. It's in Black Thief Cove now, but it will move to Castletown quite soon."

"And who is the strange man on shore, Mikey?"

"That I don't know, Dana. I had him in and out of my eyes but I lost him when he was coming over the hills. I don't know how he got to the hills from the ship, if he came on the ship. If he's a strange man, well, he has come to a strange land. Dana, there is a black blight that has come on everything."

Anyone watching these two men from a little distance would have thought that they were both standing at their ease on the water, so low did their small boats ride.

"Not the blight on me, Mikey," Dana maintained. "I possess a sovereign against all black blights."

"How much better it was in the old days," Mikey Moloney was saying (and Dana was weighing the mile-away man on shore with his eyes and mind), "when the iron-workers and artifactors, the gnomes and the pookas, lived under the hills and worked there. Those iron-workers, those Industrialists, were not counted as people then, and yet they were on proper terms with people. They brought up their iron artifacts from their underground dens and they traded them to the people for ducks' eggs and whiskey and fish and mussels and oats. That is the way it should be. They came up to traffic only on cloudy days. I believe that they were forbidden to see the sun.

"But now they often work on the surface of the land, and they eat up the green land itself. Moreover, they pass themselves off as people, and sometimes they are accepted. Did you know that, Dana?"

"I know that, Mikey. At one end of my last voyage, I met an iron-master who had one hundred boys and men working for him.

Mikey, he looked so much like a human that I felt myself inclined to accept him as one."

"Ah, you laugh at me with your eyes and your mouth, Dana. But I tell you that it was better when many of the things and creatures remained under the ground. And beyond the Industrialists who should never have seen the light of day, there is another blight, Dana. The potatoes begin to fail everywhere."

"They stink in the fields, Mikey," Dana said, "but I never regarded the potato-eaters as much better than underground folk. If they eat what is ashamed to see the sun then they invite all sorts of blights. When the sea begins to fail, then I will worry."

"Mikey, I must go and talk to that man on shore. I do not know what he is, but he has come quite a few hundred miles just to talk to me."

"Are you sure that he has even heard of you? He may have other errands, Dana."

"He may have, but I am his main errand. I'm a poor man, though. I haven't anything to give anybody except my eyes and my hands and a few things in my head and my trunk. He will have to know that I am not to be bought, and hardly to be hired."

"Go to him, Dana," Mikey said, "and I'll back you up in any trouble, going in water-low behind you, and me quite a man myself."

"I don't need anyone to back me up," Dana grinned, "but follow me if you want to, out of friendship and curiosity."

At that distance it was not possible to see the man well but Dana knew that he was not a familiar of the Bay. Dana knew the lines and the stance of every man in the whole Bays region and this man didn't belong. But he hadn't come from the ship either, not directly from it.

There was the illusion that Dana caught the man's eye, but Dana could hardly be sure that the man had eye or even head at that distance. Then the man crooked a finger at Dana to come.

"I will not come to any man's imperious crooked finger," Dana swore. "Let him hail me with a full hand like an honest man if he wants me to come."

The man turned away then, but it seemed as if he would wait. And Dana Coscuin also turned away and began to pull in his weighted line.

Dana stowed the line, stowed certain small things that he had brought up from the wrecks, put on his shirt and his shoes, looked once more at the shore (the man was still there and it was not far from Dana's own Castletown shore), and turned to his oars.

He would row the mile to the shore without once looking around at it. And when he was very near it, he would hunch, heave, give a mighty lurch, and set his boat ashore on the only narrow strip where it was possible to beach it so.

(Ah, but the man there knew that this was the only narrow bit of shore around where a boat might be beached. Do not underestimate that man.)

Then Dana would leap out clear, making a full turn in the air as he came up from the rowing bench, land with both feet on the pebbly shore, and set the end of his great finger right against the man's nose. Dana could do these things exactly and to the very inch.

And Dana did it all exactly, or within the very beggar's inch of it. He did it, and quick fire stung the end of his finger. It was a Spanish man smoking a Spanish cigar, and Dana had jabbed his finger into the fire end of it. Well, he had come pretty close to blind-tagging the man on the nose, and yet that man had taken part of the play from him.

"There will be times, Dana, when for your very life you must come closer than that," the Spanish man said. The man was a dandy in dandy shoes, but he was mocking Dana and he had won the right to. He was standing on that little gravelly strip between the muds, and there was no mud on his shoes and no prints showing the way he had come.

The man could not have come there by small boat. Dana, awake or asleep, knew every boat that was anywhere on Bantry Bay. He had even known of the veiled ship or boat: it was simply that he had not seen it for its morning mist. The man could only have come over the hills from Kenmare Bay, or have arrived that morning on the mystery ship or on the packet-boat to Castletown, and walked the mile from that shore to this place. But he couldn't have done either without soiling his dandy shoes.

"All right, Spanish man, what is your name?" Dana asked easily. Dana had the poignant feeling that he knew this man. Dana had been to Spain twice, and had traded with Spanish men in the Bay, but this was no man he had met on those doings.

"I haven't any name at the moment," the man said. "Neither have you. It is said that you may win one for yourself later, if you are the man I believe you are. Go to Hendaye. That is all."

The man turned away and seemed to have dismissed Dana.

"Turn back, man," Dana said stoutly. "You do not go till I tell you to go. You are on my own untitled land and I will have words with you. What do you mean when you say 'Go to Hendaye?'"

"Acaso, I have the wrong man," the Spaniard pronounced sadly,

but there was something of a tricky humor about his nose and his mouth. "I was told to find the young man with Bright Fate written all over him, one who could see a crooked finger at a mile and who could tag a notion on the nose at a like distance, a man who could apprehend a simple instruction at first ear, one who would not need to ask questions." The Spanish man seemed very sad in his disappointment at Dana. "I say to you 'Go to Hendaye,' and you look at me as if there were more to be said. Clearly I have the wrong man, one unable to understand at first ear."

"It may be that you do have the wrong man," Dana granted. "I can be an unquestioning man also, but I will question you. By what authority do you tell me to go to Hendaye?"

"At least you do not ask where is Hendaye and how you should get there," the Spanish man smiled. He smiled more with his nose than with his mouth.

"I know these things," Dana told him. "It is the border town with the French landing and the smaller Spanish landing. But I do not know your authority."

"And I will not tell you the authority," the man said shortly. "You will go there because you have been chosen to enter the employ of a certain man. You would not recognize his name if I told you, and I will not tell you."

"You recruit for him?"

"I, ah yes, I recruit for him."

"But the wars are finished in Spain," Dana said reasonably, "and the pay there was always indifferent and random. The Government has enough dogs for soldiers, and the Carlists also have enough worn-out dog-soldiers to lie on the high rocks and sun themselves in the recall of worn-out wars. There is nothing in that rocky country for me. We have rocks as high and as rough in Ireland."

"Not nearly so high, not nearly so rough," the man said. "But I did not tell you that you would go to Spain from Hendaye. I certainly did not tell you that you would go to the Carlist Mountains. You learned this without words, for it is true that that is where you will go first. So it may be that you are the right young man after all. There is a special rock in that Carlist country and that is where you will begin. It's a harsh and glazed rock. I say this, Dana, and I am a partisan of it. There are many things wrong with it. It may be that it is fundamentally wrong, but at least it is fundamental. And you have not found any fundamental thing yet."

"But I have," Dana maintained. "I have the rock itself, as have many in Ireland, as have many even in Spain."

"Go to Hendaye."

"I will go first and sell my boat and my *bothan* to a man," Dana said.

"No. Go empty-handed. Go now. Go to Hendaye."

"One *or*, one gold piece, is always given to a recruit on the bargain."

"To you three, Dana, and you have just received them."

"I had four already in my *sparan*."

"Now you have seven there. Could you not feel the added weight with your fine sensing? Enough of talk. Go to Hendaye."

They hadn't any full language in common. They spoke in mixed scraps of Spanish and Irish and English and French. Spanish men and Irish men had always been able to understand each other on Bantry Bay which was also called Spanish Bay. They had understood each other back when they spoke in scraps of Norman and Irish and Navarrone, back when they used Old Norse and Middle Irish and Dog Latin, back when they used Arabic and Gothic and Celtic, even back when they used Phoenecian and Milesian.

Dana didn't look into his *sparan*, in his pouch. He knew that it now held three more gold pieces. He felt the added wight without question. He asked no more questions. He had, in fact, been waiting for someone to name him a destination. It was the year 1845 and the rot was in the Irish ground. Dana understood, as many still did not, that there would be no crops in Ireland that year or the next, and very little in the third year. It was the big hunger. It was the famine come again in the extreme form that had been foretold in the cycles, and he who was on the Bay Shore need not turn back either to the Land or to the Bay.

He realized also that Bantry Bay with its free ways was only the short tail of the island creature that was enslaved, that Ireland was more deeply enslaved than any country in the world had ever been, that there would be no alleviation at all from the slave masters, and that this blight would creep even over the Bays. It was the land that no good man could ever forget, and no free man could live in any longer.

Dana Coscuin went to Hendaye on the French-Spanish border. He began by turning his back on the Bay, leaving his boat there ("The boat and the trout and the things under the trout are yours, Mikey," he called out), and heading into the Cloonee hills that are behind Castletown. He did not look back at the Spanish man. He suspected that the man was somehow gone now.

Dana was a little abashed that he had asked any questions at all. The man had spoken with the air of delegate authority. He had

said that Dana should go to Hendaye. It would have been of much better effect if Dana had turned and gone there at once without words. And now he went there, with all proper directness.

Into the Cloonee Hills then for a while: from their not great height Dana could see the Ship. It was behind Bear Haven right off the Castletown Landing. The ship was named *Skaebne*, Dana saw, so it was a Norse ship. A 'cat-built bark' it would be called, and the 'cat' had a Norse meaning of the shape of the hull. There was no style at all to it. It is all legend that the Norse had ever had stylish ships. It was squarish and seaworthy, with three masts, and no hint of an engine or a funnel. "Three hundred nineteen tons burden, one hundred and three feet long, ten knots sail," Dana guessed from his far-seeing eyes (but his guesses were no more than close), "and she will carry a master and nine men, and one passenger with gold for his fare, myself. She is going, though she does not know it yet, to Hendaye. And she will go just before tomorrow dawn." And now it was barely today afternoon.

Dana climbed into the sheep hills, the goat hills, the brown-cow hills. He wound through the black-pig valleys and the red-pig thickets. He came over small stubble land inside stone fences where poor oats had just been cut with hand sickle. These oat fields were smaller, a visiting Scotchman had once said, than were the crockery bowls in which oat porridge was served in Scotland. Oh, the oat fields and the wheat fields were quite small. The berry thickets were small. Some of the meadows were so narrow that horned cows could not pass each other in one. Some of the brooks were so narrow that two brook trout could not pass: when two of them met, one must always back up till they came to a wider pool to pass. And some of the dogs that wrangled in these scraps and dells were so narrow and skinny that two fleas could not pass on one dog. It was a very small world.

The mountains here were rough enough and over-hanging enough to the eye, and they were very tall—unless the eye had something to compare them to. But here, here, this tall cliff was really no more than five man-heights tall, and none of them was really grand. They weren't meant to be. This was a world in miniature, all the bays, and the splintered hills between the bays. But outside there was a larger world.

But the small country was all green, too green. The rain had been far too bountiful that year and the year before. The rot and the blight was brought on by this excessive moisture. And all above the green turf and fields was something like a low red mist: the red fungus, the companion of the blight, the parasite that hovered like thin bloody fog over the greenery and preyed on it.

"My information is that you are going to Spain of the Spanish," Peter Gorman said. Peter Gorman was a sheep-man who came up behind Dana softly, but Peter could not have had any information of the subject of Dana's going at all.

"I go to Hendaye," Dana said, "and from there I do not know."

"You will go to Spain, to the Carlist Hills," Peter insisted. "There is one high mountain there, Dana, the highest in the world except Ararat, and it is only one cubit less high. At the time of the flood, there was one thing on this Carlist mountain that was not quite covered by the water. It was the powerful arm of a man extending up from the waves, and its hand held the Carlist flag. You can see them all there yet, the arm, the hand, the flag, all turned to stone. I have seen these things. I also was a hired soldier in Spain in my youth. There are wonderfully solid things there, Dana, but they do carry the petrification a little far. Look out for it. We are not meant to be like rocks absolutely."

"It is the rumor that you will go to Pamplona of Spain and then to Paris of Spain," Dennis Keene said a quarter of an hour and a mile further on. Dennis also had come up behind Dana Coscuin softly. An Irishman always delights in coming up behind another Irishman unseen and beginning a conversation in the middle.

"The rumor cannot be correct, Dennis," Dana said. "Paris, and I did not know that I was going there, is of France and not of Spain."

"Are you sure of that, Dana, are you quite sure of it?" Dennis asked with apprehension. "I have heard others say that it was in France, but my father always maintained that it was in Spain, and I will maintain it after him. You will know for sure, I suppose, when you get there. Why don't you go to America and work for money and send back money for passage for all of us? Then we can all be gone from Ireland, this leprous angel whom we love."

"I may go to America, Dennis, I don't know. Bright Fate, I believe, has caught me by the scruff of the neck and picked me up. And Bright Fate is capable, for I've heard of her doing it again and again, of dropping me just as suddenly to be spitted on a mountain spire or drowned in the ocean. But I'll not forget Ireland."

"How could you forget her, Dana, and the smell of the rotting potatoes of Ireland filling the whole world wherever you go for remembrance? There are people lying dead and unburied in Cork. And the famine, they say, has hardly started."

Dennis Keene was a pig-man. He was likewise a fowler, a birdman. He netted and limed the birds from the largest to the

smallest, and down to the very small birds that make sparrows look like eagles. Nowhere but in the West Bay Country of Ireland will they take birds that require fifty of them to the pound. And pluck and clean and roast them carefully—a hundred of them to make a meal. There are bugs in other countries larger than these smallest birds. But the birds were inexhaustible. On some days they would fill the valleys and the low air almost solid to the depth of a man. On some days they would fill the sky almost as solidly and cover the sun. One could always eat in the Bay Country if one was willing to eat small.

"The word has come to me, Dana, that you will go to Spain, and to France, and to the Eastern Marches," the priest Croinin said a little later and a little further along as he came up behind Dana Coscuin in the brown-cow hills. "I have certain unholy visions about you in the circumstances, and I blame you partly for that. I see you dying a different death in each of the three places. What worries me is that in the first instance I see you dying dishonorably. Myself, I have died a number of deaths, and one of them must have been dishonorable or I would not be so dried out in my spirit now. One can live the dangerous life, the dedicated martyrdom, for a year, or ten, or thirty. Then a little of the danger and hardship is lifted and it is seen that it was only the difficulties that kept one going. One comes to question whether there was ever anything worthwhile except the grinding poverty and the living like a hunted animal. The juice has all gone out of me, except the final juice which we have as a promise. But you are young and virtuous, Dana, and full of the real springtime and summer juices. Now I talk to you sternly, young man: think twice before you die dishonorably in Spain."

"If I have time for it, I will think twice before I die at all, and three times before I die dishonorably in Spain."

The priest was very old and very much dried out in body and mind and spirit. The time was past, more than fifteen years past, when priests might be killed merely for being priests in Ireland. Now they were killed for other reasons; but this dried-out priest was no longer in any danger. He missed, he missed most bitterly, the daily danger of death. He had delighted in life because it had stood up as a challenge, and now there was nothing left to challenge his spent life. Besides, he had missed sanctity, and that was expected of very old priests in Ireland.

A last afternoon in the hills. There was the incredibly clear sunlight that made the colors of everything stand up and sing. There was black sky and rain twice, and then there was the

incredibly clear sunlight again. Along about dark, and dark came very late at that season, Dana came to laughter and to the stone house of his only kindred, the lady Aileen Dinneen.

She was already at supper with her suitors, there were four of them this evening, and they gave Dana a howling welcome.

"*Moladh, moladh,*" Danny McGivern cheered, "Dana is the scapegoat elected to assume our sins and take them out of Holy Ireland to be drowned with him in the sea. You'll be perfect in the role, Dana."

Aileen was quickly setting a place for her cousin Dana at the long table.

"Dana will split his great wealth in five parts and give a fifth to each of us to have masses said for his soul," Collin O'Connor sang his welcome. "And we'll celebrate your soul with your own wealth, Dana, but not all of it upon masses."

"Aye, leave us and go to the foreign lands, Dana," James O'Nolan lilted, "and by your going you'll raise the moral and mental level of old Ireland that you leave behind and of the foreign land that you enter. 'Twill profit the entire world, Dana. The going out of the Irish is a wonderful thing."

"Go out from the too close passion inside the lines, Dana," Samuel Lively said, "and leave the field to the licit suitors. It was for fear of the too close love that one great hero went out of Iolcus and another out of Clonmel."

"I have not said that I was going anywhere," Dana said as he embraced Aileen. "Where should I go?"

"Oh, we know much about the Spanish man who brought you your instructions," the suitor Danny McGivern said while they were all busy eating bay trout, "but there is a great argument about him. Now you must tell us exactly what he wore and what was his mien when you talked to him."

There was no enmity and not much rivalry between the four suitors of Aileen who were eating in her stone house this evening. Because of the troubles, nobody married early in Ireland in those years. For the last several years, nobody seemed to marry at all. They merely talked about it. And such a lady as Aileen might have several suitors, none of them yet in a position to file his suit. This Danny McGivern was a hedge schoolteacher, an instructor of the young. But there was no money forthcoming for that.

"I don't remember what he wore, Danny, and nobody else saw him, except Mikey Moloney from the distance," Dana said. "But in Ireland of the crookie tongues there is no need to see a thing to talk about it. The Spanish man wore a cigar in his face, he wore dandy shoes on his feet, and he must have worn something in

between. He was a man who smiled more with his nose than with his mouth. Hey, is that possible? I don't know for a fact that he was a Spanish man. I don't know how the report of him got to the *conairt* of you, unless an eel brought it, or a bay trout, or a bird."

"Oh, there were many who saw the man talking to you, but they disagree on their testimony," said the suitor Collin O'Connor. (Wait you here just a little bit; there was something a little bothersome about Collin's way of talking, about the doings of his nose and his mouth.) "Is it not true, Dana, that he wore a proper suit, all black like that of an undertaker or a judge? And a topper on his head, and a Spanish scraggle moustache? That he carried a riding whip in his hand, though he was dismounted? Is it not true that he had a dark piercing eye and a forbidding scowl?"

"That sounds only a little like him, Collin," Dana said. "You sound like him more."

"But when he walked up the coast towards Bear Haven and Castletown, it is said that he changed with every step he took," said the suitor named James O'Nolan. "It is said that his proper black suit changed into a sporty blue suit, that it changed gradually and mysteriously; that his black topper hat subsided into a billed cap; that his scraggle moustache burgeoned into a real basher; that his dark piercing eyes changed into a set of merry blue eyes. It is said—"

"Oh the crookie tongues of Ireland," Dana said. "He didn't at all walk up the coast towards Bear Island or Castletown. Whichever way he walked, he didn't walk that way."

"It is said that he changed still more as he walked," said the suitor named Samuel Lively, "that he changed from the Spanish sort of man into an English sort of man, then into an Irish sort of boy, big and awkward and laughing. Now the remarkable thing about this, Dana, is that the man was watched all the way from where he was talking to you till he luffed into Castletown itself; he was in sight of someone every minute of that time. He had been a Spanish man when it began, but do you know who it was when it ended?"

"It was the same as when it began," Dana said.

"No, it was not," Danny McGivern set things straight. "It was none other than Lump-Robert Oates, the young son of Brandon Oates. I collared him myself when he shambled into Castletown. 'Here, here, what are you doing turning into various sorts of men?' I asked him pretty roughly, and I shook him. 'There is something unblest about a boy changing forms,' I said. Then Lump-Robert told me how it was, and him so honest and witless of eye that I had to believe him. 'I went to sleep beside a haycock

that I know,' Lump-Robert said to me. 'I dreamed that I was turned into a Spanish man to take a message to Dana Coscuin, and that he was to give me a silver shilling for it. I did it. Then I came back and slept by the haycock again till I should turn into myself. And there you grabbed me, Mr. Daniel McGivern, and dragged me by the throat into Castletown here. And now I am myself again, but not entirely. And Dana Coscuin owes me a silver shilling.' That's what Lump-Robert told me, and it's a mighty queer happening, Dana my boy, and I hoped you might clear it up since one end of the happening happened to you. And if you will give me the silver shilling I will convey it to the boy Lump-Robert Oates, since you are leaving the country."

(The look that passed between the four of them, between the five of them including Aileen, the black fabricators, they!)

"Oh, Ireland of the legends," Dana grinned. "Oh the long and crookie tongues of Ireland! Every legend in the world has had this same beginning and setting: there was the young lady of bright fame (her own talented tongue had given her most of her fame), and there were her four suitors who were too poor and unpropertied to sue. They gathered in the evenings and told lies, they being too poor to do other things. Out of such eggs came the legends. Remember, bright people, what tales you tell in this *creagach* house tonight will be told tomorrow night in the Babylon of four thousand years ago. But how is it that Collin O'Connor resembles the Spanish man?"

"Ah, it was Collin O'Connor who turned into the Spanish man for a joke; it was not Lump-Robert Oates at all," Aileen said.

"No, it was not," Dana rippled, his green eyes shining in the lamplight. "It is that Collin is a great mimic, but he had to have something to mimic. He met the Spanish man this day, and perhaps he conspired with him. And now I will miss you all, boys, and you Aileen of the Dinneen blood which flows through the left side of my own body. Have none of you suitless suitors brought us a little whisky tonight so that we can hold wake for me who am leaving Ireland, which is the same as leaving the land of the living?"

"I have a little left," Aileen said (chafers in her voice, meadow birds in her lilty voice), "we will give you a wake, but it may not be so happy as many of them are. Can a man die, or emigrate, with a clean heart when he leaves things so unsettled behind him? And Samuel Lively here also has a half bottle which he hid in my north manure pile on his arriving. There is something going on between Samuel Lively and my north manure pile." (Just one year ago, Samuel Lively had killed an English enforcer and hid his body in

Aileen Dinneen's north manure pile; the body was still there.) "Go get it, Samuel," Aileen said now. "The whisky, not the body," Dana said to his own appreciative self.

"And the Friday eels are near ready for eating," Aileen sounded. Aileen was likely the most sparkling girl in the Cloonee Hills: stocky and swift and powerful like Dana, greener-eyed, fairer-haired, deeper-grinning; quite young and completely independent. She was roguish kindness itself, but an illicit passion for her would, in any case, have forced Dana to flee Bantry Bay, as other great heroes had fled Iolcus and Clonmel.

"There is nothing like lingering over the whisky and the eels when the sun is down," Aileen said. Samuel Lively had brought the whisky in now, and the eels were cooked.

"Even in Heaven on a Friday night," Aileen was talking, "what could the Saints find better to do than to drink the good whisky and eat the long eels and sit on the lap of Aileen Dinneen?"

Was Aileen faulting them for her own empty lap? In a manless Bay house, when a group is gathered after supper or at party, the favored man-guest will sit on the lap of the woman of the house. This is to reign over that house from 'Queen's lap' or from 'Widow's lap.' The other men will feel or pretend jealousy of the man who sits on the lady's lap. But who was the favored guest here tonight?

Dana lingered with his peers in Aileen's house for some hours. These four young men were the four best boat-men and hill-men in the world, after Dana Coscuin himself, but before all others. They all had the same glow on them under the lamplight. They all had the same sharp intelligence—"though it doesn't show," James O'Nolan said. "It isn't our intelligent words, but Oh, it is our intelligent silences!" And Aileen was a young woman without equal anywhere, this on the word of all of them.

Brazil coffee. Oh, oh, Madeira wine. Who had brought the Madeira? Collin O'Connor had brought it. What was he doing with Spanish wine? What was he doing mimicking the Spanish man so uncannily to Dana? A Spanish man had had to ask one of the suitors concerning the habits and whereabouts of Dana Coscuin. And he had had to pay for the information, in Spanish wine, apparently. He had known what sort of man Collin O'Connor was before ever he came to Dana. He was one smart Spanish man. Brazil coffee, Spanish wine, Irish eels, and holy Irish whisky.

"Tell me who I will be working for," Dana said to them, "you legend-makers, you crookie tongues, you black fabricators. Tell me who is the mysterious employer who sends my orders." Dana seemed younger than the rest of them, and woozier. He was not

usually such a one for the whisky as O'Nolan or Lively, certainly not such a one as Aileen. "Put your tongues together and make a story of it," Dana said, "and I will make your story pass for truth till I know the truth."

"Why, Dana, it is the Count, of course," Aileen said. "It is always the Count, of the name too august to be spoken."

"What Count, and of what country?" Dana asked.

"Oh, of none of England or Ireland," Samuel Lively fabricated, "or of none that can be revealed. This is a very ancient and mysterious Count—"

"—so ancient that he dined with the Fathers at Trent," Danny McGivern contributed.

"—and served three King Charleses in three different realms in three different centuries," Collin O'Connor added.

"—and is the master puppet-master who manipulates the other puppet-masters," the suitor James O'Nolan said.

"His name, I must have his name," Dana insisted.

"His name, Dana, my love, my life, what name will we give him, this Count who is above kings?" Aileen asked. Her green eyes were now a green color that is found only underground. "He is the Master Spider who spreads the widest web across the world. He is the first intriguer of them all. And surely he is an Eastern King also." Aileen had a curly smile for everyone, and a bosom of great depth. She had great affection for Dana, perhaps too great.

"His name, his name?" Dana still asked.

"The Count Kirol, for Kirol is an Eastern King," Samuel Lively ventured.

"It is close, but not close enough," said Collin O'Connor, the blackest fabricator of them all.

"Dana of my bosom, it is the Count Cyril that you serve," Aileen said seriously. "There is ordered mystery in all this business, and you will spend your life in unraveling it and serving it. It is the Count Cyril. But never use that name carelessly. Nor at all, save at the hour of death."

"Oh Ireland of the legends," Dana grinned. "Oh the long and crooked tongues of Ireland. The five of you say it, so I suppose it is true. The Count Cyril, you say. I wonder, will I remember the name of your creation if I hear it again? Do I deserve so grand a master?"

"You do not, Dana," James O'Nolan protested, "and you do not deserve so grand a mistress, you being of the forbidden degree, a cousin only and no suitor, and you reign from 'Queen's Lap.'"

Yes, Dana had been sitting, for the long hour, on the lap of Aileen: and, yes, the suitors were genuinely jealous.

"Now I must be gone," Dana said suddenly. "I know the times exactly and it is time for me to start. The shipmaster will be striding the landing when I come."

"Be you all gone to your homes," Aileen said to the suitors. "I will go with Dana halfway, and a little more, to the landing."

Aileen suddenly blew out the lamp. They all found their ways out of the door with considerable antic play, Aileen in the middle of it all, as she intended. Then the four suitors went to their homes: Samuel Lively who had killed an English enforcer and buried his body in Aileen's north manure pile, Danny McGivern who instructed the young (and there is no money in that), Collin O'Connor and James O'Nolan who had done stranger things. These were the friends of Dana's boyhood, and now he would go away and be a boy no more.

Aileen and Dana were on their way—

"We are all that we have of each other of the blood; a brief moon-madness now, and then we separate. God with you," she said.

"God and Mary with you," Dana told her. The flinty stars showed just midnight there on the crest above Black Thief Cove. And, after a brief moon-madness, they parted.

The one ship was at Castletown Landing, and the one shipmaster was walking on the land. He was a large fair man in the moonlight, and he lifted his head as if waiting Dana's coming.

"I will have passage on your ship to Hendaye," Dana Coscuin told the man.

"My ship goes to Santander of the Timbers and to Gijón of the Whales, both in Spain," the man said, "but she does not go to Hendaye this voyage." The man was clearly a Scandinavian, and he talked as though he were certain of his destination.

"Show me to my cabin," Dana said. "However it happens, we will go to Hendaye."

"You are able-bodied? You want to ship as a seaman?" the man asked.

"I am a gentleman with gold in my pocket. I will sail as a gentleman," Dana said.

"We carry no gentlemen passengers, only seamen," the Master told Dana. "And I will have none but fair-haired men on my ship. A black-haired man is a devil, a red-haired man is a misbegotten son of a devil. You are not Norse but you are fair. So is he. I need only one additional seaman. Fight for it if you wish."

Yes, there was another man there, standing so still that Dana had thought him a stone. And yet, would Dana not know any

stone of that size around Castletown Landing? For the size was considerable. This other man was as fair-haired as Dana, he was as young as Dana, and he stood head and shoulders taller. He was a gigantic Germanish sort of lout, slack-faced and blank-eyed. He had the biggest hands and feet that Dana had ever seen on a human man. Well, Dana Coscuin was the fastest man with fist or knife or knob-knocker in all the Three Bays region. He had never been whipped, and he had felled some real mountains of men: never men with hands and feet like this man, but very tall and very heavy men for all that.

Bright Fate said that Dana should go to Hendaye. Bright Fate said that he should go on from there to the higher country to find a fundamental rock that had so many things wrong with it. And Bright Fate had said that it was at this rock that all Dana's adventures would begin. Bright Fate had erred: Dana's adventures began right now. But Dana was not allowed to let this big hulk of a Germanish boy steal his place from him. He started forward to the encounter, and he stopped.

"Now just a minute, Dana," something said to him. It was not Fate; it was his own canny brains. "This man is not the big Germanish fellow that he seemed at first. He is not even of the human sort. He is a genuine giant."

"Well then," Dana said back to his canny brains, "I am an Irish hero, and I remember that Irish heroes fought giants before. Fought them, yes, and even seemed to defeat them."

Now here was the difficulty. No Irish hero, no hero of any sort had actually ever defeated a giant. There had been certain trickeries, certain events that spelled the downfall of giants. But the thing itself had never happened: they had not defeated a giant in combat. Well, maybe there would be certain trickeries, certain events again; and maybe Dana Coscuin would seem to defeat the giant. And, a very long maybe, that might be enough.

Dana moved in with the head-toss of a young bull. He swung like a woodchopper with a double-bitted axe: he caught the big fellow in the middle with a heavy series of shocking blows that did sound like a sharp axe biting solid oak. And Dana looped long high smashes at the big slack jaws and the glistening face of the giant, smashes now with the solid sharp sound of the axe into pinewood. For a human-sized man, Dana himself had tremendous fists. He struck again resoundingly, and he stepped back to let the giant fall.

And he did not fall. He bent a little at the knees; he bent a little at the middle. His slack face was ruddy in the moonlight from Dana's blows. But he was not as blank-eyed as he had been (rather

crafty-eyed now) and he did not bleed and he did not fall. He watched with near canniness whether Dana would go for something else but Dana was never the first one to kite a fight. Besides, the giant had a longer knife than Dana's, and a longer pistol.

Dana moved in again, faster than before. He found his vision darkened and crimsoned by a giant bear-blow, but then he was inside the defences of the giant. He chopped with the sharp-edged fury that would have disemboweled a bear. He felt the giant's hands and arms come down like two trees upon his shoulders, but the big tree itself was an open target between them.

Dana swung as though he were swinging a pole-axe or battle-axe. This was sturdy Dana Coscuin who could burst oat-sacks with his fists, who could lift a riding pony on his shoulders. He was the strongest fast man in the Bays area and he had three open, shattering, murderous, ox-felling fist-axe chops at the big open face. He made to step back to let the giant fall.

The giant did not fall this time either, and Dana did not exactly step back, not as he had intended. He stumbled and twisted with the weight and force of a tree-like arm on either shoulder. Then an exuberance seized the giant. He had Dana with his two huge hands, one at the nape of the neck, one at the crotch. And Dana was swung and thrown, thrown in the giant's swing.

Dana flew through the tumbling air. He hit spread out like a crucified crow against a heavy mooring pile on the shore, and he heard the piling crack or groan from the shock. He hung there for a short instant from the force of the impact, and perhaps from the adhesion of his own gore. Then he fell on his face, half in the water, half on the stony ground.

"Aye, the giants have returned to Ireland," Dana moaned with his mouth in the gravelly mud. All his bones were broken except the one small bone that Outlander giants do not know about.

"Mother of God, and I die here in my youth and my virtue," Dana breathed.

"I hate it a little," the Ship Master was saying some time later. "You are a fine boy, it seems, but he is a fine man, and I need only one of you. I leave you here. You'll not drown here. The tide'll not rise another inch. It's high now, and we'll shove almost at once. If you die of it, it's but to be expected. But I do regret it."

"Oh the Green Hills of Skibbereen!" Dana moaned where he lay. And, as they tell of many an Irish hero, he died and he stank upon the stones.

His death, however, was not a long one. The Ship Master came again, after a very little while. He came in a somewhat vexed

mood and hauled Dana out of the steep flames of Purgatory and set him on his feet.

"The big *bonde* says that he'll not go without you," the Ship Master complained. "What am I do do? I need only one of you. Will you go without him?"

"No, I will not," Dana said out of his bloodied mouth. "I'll not leave Ireland unguarded to him here on the shore. Bright Fate now says that the two of us, the giant and I, will be together for a while. And Bright Fate says that we will rejoin several other times in blood-spilling places."

"My ship is named *Skaebne*. She is not named *Skinneende Skaebne*," the Ship Master said with some inconsequence. He was saying that his ship was named Fate, but not Bright Fate.

"Well, it would be the Shining Fate to have the both of you with me in a trouble, either on the ship or on the shore," the Ship Master continued.

Dana Coscuin came on board the *Skaebne* with only one of his bones still unbroken, but that was the bone that can work the rapid regeneration of the whole person.

II

THOU CLOIG, THOU SCHED, THOU CRANE, THOU TALKING SKULL

There were nine men on the ship that heaved out of Bantry Bay on the tide-turn before dawn. The ship had been bringing whale oil and timber spars out of Norway to Spain, and had touched down in Ireland for water, for medlar fruit, for perry, and for pigs, and to bury a man who had died that past day. Really, the ship had touched down in Ireland to pick up Dana Coscuin.

Many northern ships took the Irish outer way to Spain, to avoid the scrutiny that English ships sometimes turned on goods bound for Spain. There was bad water between England and Spain even when there was no war. And the Back Doors of the World had never gone clear out of use.

"There are no snakes in Ireland," the giant was saying to Dana as they cleared Three Castle Head, "but they ring the ocean all around the land. A Snake Master will give the signal, some day, and they will invade and devour the whole land. The entire ocean is full of snakes."

"They are not snakes. They are conger eels," Dana told the giant. "Good whisky and long eels and to sit in the lap of fair Aileen, that is what Friday night in Heaven is like."

"Is that a poem?" the giant asked.

"Aye. It's the Westernmost Poem of the World."

"It is part of the poem of Maid Helen," the giant said inconsequentially.

The dawn was to port of them, and Three Castle Head behind—the last sight of Ireland that Dana would have for several years. It was the prime island of the world but the rot was in the land: literally so this year, as it had been figuratively all through the slave centuries.

"Alas for the sharp smells of Ireland," Dana moaned.

"You will find Spain pungent enough," the Ship Master told him. And nine days to Hendaye where they weren't supposed to be

going.

"Was there a one, a stranger person, who told you to go to Hendaye?" Dana asked the big Germanish boy (he hadn't been a giant, that was all delusion; he was a hulking German as he had first seemed) as they were reefing together on a spar.

"No. But there was one, a stranger person, who told me to go to Dana Coscuin," the big fellow said. "I didn't know whether the Dana thing was a place or a man, and I was too abashed to ask questions of the man who ordered me so directly. I came out of my own Mark to a Frisian coast town. In every Frisian coast town, it is the case that one man or other will know the name of every town in the world. And in every Frisian coast town, it is the case that one man or other will know the name of every man on every sea. It was the last man I asked in the Frisian town who knew the name of Dana Coscuin and that he sailed in and out of the bays of Southwest Ireland."

There was something about this big Kemper that was either very childish or very droll. Often he seemed a simpleton. But he had the sudden brains when he needed them, just as he had the sudden strength.

"If you were sent to me for direction, Kemper, I have none," Dana said. "I am the most lost man in the world. I know only that I am first to go to Hendaye, and I have no idea who orders me there."

"I only know that I am to go where you go for a while," Kemper said, "and then I will be told where else to go."

The big fair giant was named Kemper Gruenland and he was from deep in the Germanies. He was not uneducated. He was better booked than Dana who had learned a little Religion and Arithmetic and Latin under the hedges, and a little of other things on the oceans and the lands. Kemper's head was filled with a variety of things, but they were none of the same things that were in Dana's own head. Kemper was not silly; he was only dreamy. He questioned everything in the world, but never in the way of disbelief. Now, indeed, he did question who had ordered him out into the world, and who had ordered that orderer. But he did not question the order itself. He didn't understand Dana speaking of Bright Fate. He had believed fate to be dark.

"Well, let us agree that it is Green Fate that calls us out then," Dana said. "It's bright by sun and dark by moon, and it grows by both. It hasn't finished growing in us, it hasn't found its own direction yet. It is a riddle, Kemper, a fiddle-riddle. If I had my fiddle here, I would play you music that is green on the outside,

and blood-red on the inside when you break open a note. My music is the delight of the pigs and the salmon and the envy of the larks. I am, and this is known the length and depth of Bantry Bay, the greatest fiddle-player in the world."

Dana was joking. He wasn't really very good on the fiddle. But Kemper answered with great seriousness and near-anger.

"No, my fiddle would break your fiddle with the very tone of it," he insisted. "I was told to go to you, Dana, and I go for a while. And I will follow you for a very little while. But my fiddle could break your fiddle and I could break you. My boat could sink your boat. There is a tree by my house that could splinter the tree by your house. I have mountains that could grind your mountains down to gravel. And my sweetheart will be twice as big as your sweetheart."

They hadn't any full common tongue between them. They used a little bit of fisherman Dutch Frisian, a little English, a little French. They did not get along badly.

"Do you know the name of our ultimate employer?" Dana had to ask. Something was bothering him here: the chance that Kemper knew more than he did about this.

"The Count Cyril," big Kemper said. "I am honored to be in his employ, even if he sends me for a while to follow a small man. I take high pride in being associated with this great man in any way. But his name is all that I know."

Dana Coscuin had exploded into ringing whooping laughter.

"Oh the depraved five of them, the black fabricators!" he chortled in amazement. "Oh the deceptive devils! They'd make the devil himself ashamed with their tricks. How could they have done it to you, poor Kemper? They'd have to have legended your mind at three miles' distance on yesterday night. Is it possible that their naming and trickery is so powerful? Ah, the long and crookie tongues of them all, and the conniving lap and shoulders of the lady Aileen! Was it not about two hours before midnight last night, Kemper, that the name of Count Cyril bounced into your head for the first time?"

"It was not, Dana. What is the matter with you? It was more than a month ago that the great name was first spoken to my ears. I asked a dozen persons about it then, and I discovered that it was a known name. Nobody was able to give me any information on the great Count, but all leading persons had heard of him. I have the dates and circumstances all down in my day-book."

"What is this, Kemper. The world has a wrong wobble on its axle then. It is you who have foxed the gab fabricators. Kemper man, you are not capable of it. How could you have intruded that

name into their conniving heads? You don't know who he is or of what he is Count?"

"No, I don't know these things at all, Dana. He is a person who has always been there, just one step beyond. It's as though he were my own grandfather, I suppose, if I had a third grandfather. He's in early country stories also, is the Count Cyril. I don't remember any of them except one. This is that he is really the Count of every County and Grafschaft on Earth; that whoever else seems to hold them, they hold them from the Count Cyril, or they hold them in error or usurpation. And there are many other things that I only guess at or put together with my own fine wits."

There was something about big Kemper that was either completely childish or bewilderingly joking.

"I was to find you, Dana, and to go with you a ways," Kemper said. "And I am to part from you, and later join you again. We are to be loosely of a small group, choice ones recruited by one of the parties of recruiters. It seems wrong that one like me should follow one like you, but I will do this for the group and for the Count Cyril. I believe that I am to be in second place to you for only a short time: until your death. Let that not be too long, Dana. I will grow very restless in second place."

It was nine days to Hendaye, where they hadn't been going. The sea swept gray and purple out of the west all that time, aromatic and arrogant, but never really loud or foamy except when it smelled land. The Ship Master himself seemed a little puzzled when they finally rode off Hendaye landing. He came very near to making excuses for being there.

Dana and Kemper, with the Ship Master and one other man, took the boat from the ship and landed certain bales on the Spanish shore. They made three such trips. But the ship itself stood off the French town. And then the Ship Master with Dana and Kemper and the one other man came ashore to French Hendaye.

"I will sign one other seaman here in Hendaye," the Ship Master said, "or I will sign two. There are seamen of all sorts in Hendaye and it will be no trouble getting a fair-haired one. I know that the two of your are going other places. You are going land-soldiering, I believe, and the ocean will not keep you now. Besides, you are the worst seamen in the world."

"I myself am the best seaman in the world," Dana Coscuin said.

"I suppose so," the man answered, "and Kemper is the worst, but it hasn't been too bad. Oh but I would like to come to a hot quarrel with someone here while you two are still at my side!"

"Why have we landed some bales on the Spanish shore and

some on the French?" Kemper asked the Ship Master.

"There are more gold and green plants to be plucked along a crooked shore than a straight," the Ship Master said. "We sell certain things to the smugglers on the Spanish side and certain other things to the smugglers on the French side. And tonight each group will cross the border to the other side with their goods. And all parties grow rich by this."

"Why not land the bales for the French on the French side and the bales for the Spanish on the Spanish side?" Kemper asked with some reason.

"And how then will the smugglers thrive?" the Ship Master asked, but he winked broadly.

Here on the green parts of the land, more even than in Ireland, it seemed to Dana that there was a faint red dust or growth on all the greenery, and a thin red mist over it all.

"Is the blight here also?" Dana asked out loud. "Have all the potatoes rotted here too?"

French Hendaye was not large and it had never been. But there was everything there, one of everything. It had a cosmopolitan landing. It had a resort beach which was in some ways the most modish and entertaining one in Europe. It had shops for every curiosity and supply. It had people who made it their business to be accommodating and friendly, and Dana and Kemper were friendly with them. It was a rattling seashore town, sharp and bright and noisy in the late summer noontime. The Hendaye girls were all short and stocky and laughing. They had round cheeks like apples; they had round rumps and bellies like melons; they had round eyes like muley cows. It could have been a gay town.

"But I cannot provoke a quarrel anywhere," the Ship Master told them as he returned from one of his forays. He had his new seaman with him, half again as big as Dana, two-thirds as big as Kemper. "I really wanted a land-quarrel with someone, this one time when I have two such handy fair-haired men as you with me, and this new one here also," the Ship Master said. "I may never have your like again. But I cannot provoke a quarrel with anyone: not the Englishmen or the Frenchmen or the Dutchmen or the Savoy-men; not with the Spanish, not even with the Basques. They are all pleasant and friendly and they will not be provoked. I steal a mile from them and they go along the second mile with me. Should I rip a shirt from a man's back, I believe that he would have a cloak brought from ship's stores to give me along with it. Their fists and their knives will rot away from non-use. I believe that the people of this place are tainted with Scripture and are beyond hope. We leave you two now. We will meet you again

someday if you remember where the ocean is; I will not forget. It is very likely we can provoke a bloody quarrel with somebody the next time we are all together and so we will not waste the opportunity."

A lady came and handed Dana a potato. She had overheard him ask whether the potatoes had all rotted; she had believed Dana to be destitute and begging for one potato.

The Ship Master had started back to his ship with his new seaman.

Dana, however, had already noticed that not all the people of this place were tainted with Scripture. There were men here who would slit your gullet rather than go one inch with you, men who'd gun you down before they'd turn the other cheek. They were the men of the furry eyeballs, as one old saying has it.

There was a squarish bearded man who had been looking Dana in the eye and drawing the edge of his hand across his throat with a 'we will cut you down' gesture. And this squarish man came and blocked off Dana's way as soon as the Ship Master had finally left.

"You are going up into the Carlist Hills," the man accused.

"I am not at all sure where I am going," Dana told him, "but it does not concern you or your beard."

"We will burn down the Carlist Hills," the man said. "We will break them up into pieces and burn those pieces in lime kilns. We are the charcoal-burners and we know how to burn everything. We will shove the Carlist Hills into the ocean to build a new quay here. We will have out of them all the blood of those people there. We will sell it for pigs' blood. We will sell the meat of those people in the meat shops. We will chop the clerics to pieces and feed them to the swine."

"You make the wrong move, square man, and I will have the beard off your face and the eyes out of your head," Dana said in that pleasant fashion in which sparring men sometimes confront each other. "Why are you, a Frenchman, concerned about whatever goes on in the Spanish hills?"

"I'm no Frenchman, I'm a world-man," said the fellow with the beard. "For freedom, we will grind down those hills and have all the sick blood out of every man there. There is nobody left in the hills now except worn-out old men, and they are entirely discredited."

"So, why do you fume and puff about them, charcoal-burner?" Dana asked.

"For freedom," said the man with the beard. "For freedom we cannot leave one man alive in all those hills. Watch to yourself, straw-hair. It's a pig-knife between your own ribs before this day

is done."

Dana looked at the black-bearded man standing in the white-dust road and he knew that this man was as fundamental as were the Carlist Hills themselves. He was a little afraid of this man. 'Well, perhaps this man is a little afraid of me also,' he told himself. 'Most often it runs in both directions.' And aloud he said:

"Let it come, beard-man, by sun or by dark. I have strung more pigs than yourself has."

The bearded man went away for a while. His stature, but not his menace, diminished with the distance.

"The bearded man is named Jude Revanche," a lady told Dana. She was the same lady who had given Dana the potato.

"He is Judas," Dana said.

"What? No, his name is Jude, not the other."

The Ship Master in his boat was half-way to the ship. He would go to unload spar-timber at Santander of the Timbers, and whale oil at Gijón of the Whales. This was a little like carrying coals to Newcastle or guano to Chinchá, but the Ship Master was a man who understood sea commerce. He brought his goods to the world market, or the Europe market for them.

It was a bright beachy town of white sunlight and curiously buzzing air. There was a very large and very handsome girl there. She was named Margaret. She looked at Dana, but she joined hands with Kemper Gruenland. She went off hand-in-hand with Kemper, but she still looked back at Dana, telling him to come to the same place.

There was another girl there. A very odd girl.

"That one is a saint," said the lady who had given Dana the potato and who had told him the name of Jude Revanche. "Go with her if she wants you to go. She is a saint."

The girl was very young, no more than twelve, huge and shapeless, with eyes that were almost entirely white, and an expression that Dana had seen on sheep, hares, and doe-deer, seldom on a woman. The girl was possibly moronic. Dana knew at once that she was without speech, but that she had a special sort of understanding.

She clasped Dana tightly. She even lifted him off his feet and carried him some steps. She pulled him along.

"Go with her. We call her Sainte Erma," the lady who was there said. The huge young girl wanted Dana to go with her, and he went.

—to an unmodish seaman place where the bee-buzzing in the air was the loudest. The white-eyed girl brought Dana to a woman and delivered him to her with an empty motion. And that woman

engulfed Dana completely with a smile and with the clasp of her hands.

"I did not know your name or appearance," the woman said. "I sent my daughter to find you. What she knows, she knows in another way. Go sit with those revelers till I come."

The revelers included Kemper Gruenland and Margaret Gretz, the large handsome girl, and others: a small Sardinian man, a large Frenchman, several other men of unfathomed nations, several Hendaye girls.

They ate salt fish from Brittany while the Hendaye fish beyond the surf lept in such multitudes that they dazzled the eye. They drank sour wine from Spain while the sweet grapes of France wept in their profusion. (The woman, the mother of the odd girl, had joined them now.) The sweethearts wore lace from Flanders; in Flanders, some of the sweethearts wore lace from Hendaye in France. A black seaman there talked Dutch. There was only one black man there and he went by the name of Charley Oceaen. The French talked Basque; the Italians talked French; the Germans talked Polish and Wendt. The Sardinians talked Spanish. There was a buzzing in the air yet. There was also an infectious laughter from all the corners of the room.

"What is the bee-buzzing that seems to be everywhere, inside the walls and over the roofs," Dana asked the woman who now rocked him in her bosom; this was the mother of Sainte Erma the odd girl.

"It is the whispering, the spy-whispering, Dana my young love," the lady said. "Hendaye is nothing but nests within nests of spies. The spies live in old storks' nests on the roofs and in the chimneys. They live in old cranes' nests on the rocks. In a big stork's nest one can make four little cubicles, walling them off with thin walls: one cubicle or nest each for an Emperor's Spy, for a Pope's Spy, for a King's Spy, for a People's Spy." This woman had as crookie a tongue as Dana's cousin Aileen back in Ireland, but it is harder to judge such things when they are spoken in French.

"Jane Blaye, who owns this house, is rich from renting out the storks' nests on her roofs and gables," said the large and handsome Margaret Gretz who was with Kemper Gruenland. "A man might do well to learn just how rich she is."

"There is one doctor here in Hendaye," said the lady who rocked Dana, "who is rich from nothing but fixing the sides of mouths. The spies talk out of the sides of their mouths so much that they wear them sore. There is another doctor who is rich from nothing but fixing left eyes. Spies, as everyone knows, wink with the left eye only, and they wink till the eyes are red and puffy. But the

richest of all the doctors is the thumb doctor. He fixes the thumbs for spies who have worn them out signalling and gesturing. He is the richest man in all France."

"Ah, but the richest widow in all Hendaye is Jane Blaye," said the large and handsome Margaret.

"Who is Jane Blaye?" Dana asked.

"She who rocks you in her bosom, and she is rich, Dana," handsome Margaret said.

"It is myself, boy Dana," the lady said. "Wherever you go, remember that Jane Blaye is in Hendaye, that this is the place to come back to."

A man was playing a horn-pipe there, and Dana suddenly felt the enormous vitality that was in the place. But it was sprawling with wickedness. The horn-piper might well go to Hell for that he piped the concupiscence of the flesh so strongly and with such a raucous magnetism.

"It is as I said," Kemper declared as he took hold of the large Margaret and went to dance, "my sweetheart is twice as big as your sweetheart, Dana. You could never have mine."

"He could have me for the asking," big Margaret said, "but there is no way I could get anything away from Jane Blaye."

"It is all right that I am small, Dana," Jane Blaye told him. "The Hendaye girls are the strongest in the world, and I am one of them. And the Hendaye dances are like nothing anywhere else in the world, and for this the world can be thankful. Dana, you do not have to go where they tell you to go. You can stay here in Hendaye. Nothing wrong can come to you in Hendaye."

"Have I said that I would be told where to go?" Dana asked. The horn-piper was playing the whirl-around dance that is named *toton*. But in Hendaye, to the sprawling unholy music of the horn-piper, it was the girls who whirled the men.

"I have a pack made up for you if you do go, Dana," Jane Blaye said. "I made it up several days ago."

"I was on the high seas several days ago."

"I know that. I have a mountain pack made up for you. There is the goatskin winebag that is named *gourde* here, and is named *bota* when you are over the border into Spain. It is filled with a full gallon of rough Spanish wine; that is what goes best on a rough journey. There is cheese for you, and the hard sausage, and a four-pound loaf of bread. And there are sandals. Your Irish brogues would not do in those mountains; they are designed to protect the feet from the rocks. But the sandals, which will be named *alpargatas* after you have crossed the Spanish crest, were made to unite the feet to the rocks and the roads and to blend them in one

friendship. There is a blanket, and there is an American pistol. There is a cap that is named *gorra*. You may have to travel in the mountains for seven days with this food and equipment. I will give it to you in some unexpected place this evening, after you have made your false start. This, of course, if you really do go."

"Why should I make a false start?" Dana asked.

"For the saving of your life," Jane Blaye said. "Don't you want to save it?"

Who understood what he should do? Dana did not. Jane Blaye had her own ideas, and some of them seemed to apply to somebody else, not to Dana Coscuin. The mute girl, the daughter, understood, perhaps, in her own way; but she could only communicate in her own way. Dana hugged the grotesque girl to him suddenly.

"Your daughter here, I have wondered, is it all right with her?" Dana asked.

"She is the dumb saint," Jane Blaye said, "and God will take care of her. But you, Dana, are another sort of person, and God will need considerable help in taking care of you. I will give Him and you some of this help, as will my mute daughter. Many others along the road will give you help, and do not refuse what is offered. Even so, I doubt if you will make it. My husband used to see you dead, and it depressed him."

"Your husband, and he is dead since you are a widow, never saw me or heard of me."

"Maybe not. But he used to have clammy dreams of the death of some young adventurer, and I believe that it was you."

The horn-piper was playing the Dance of the Unbreakable Dolls now. In this dance, the girls (who are the unbreakable dolls) had to maintain any position they were placed in, however twisted or comic. And they had to remain silent and blank-faced as real dolls are. If they broke position, or if they laughed, they lost the game that was the dance. And the men had leave to break the Unbreakable Dolls any way they could. How is a girl not to laugh or break position when her man jumps on her with both feet? The horn-piper was wild and raunchy, and the happy Hendaye girls were truly unbreakable and they were truly dolls.

Two English ladies, going by in the road with parasols, looked in with curious tittering. Then they continued on their way, looking back. A man went by with a barrowful of fish, and some of them would have been strangers in Bantry Bay. Blue-bloused children whistled. Soldiers looked in and chewed the ends of their moustaches.

"You need not go where they tell you to go," Jane Blaye said

again. "You need not hear at all when they call you to come. Let your ears be stubborn and closed. There are other fates to be had."

"I have not been called to go anywhere but to Hendaye yet."

"The caller will call you very soon, Dana. What you do then will be a secret between yourself and God and Jane Blaye. Come, I will show you something."

The evil horn-piper was playing Mountain Bridges now. In this dance, the girls lay down to bridge with their bodies the space between two tables or two stools, and the men—"Come along, Dana, such licentious things are not for you," Jane Blaye said)—and the men walked across on the girls' backs.

Jane brought Dana into a large and cluttered room, her own quarters. In a big cut-off corner of it there was an angry shrine. There were two, perhaps magnificent, perhaps grotesque, pieces of peasant art. One was a large wood statue of the Blessed Virgin with an expression that is not usually found on representations of the Virgin. It could only be called murderous glee. Oh, she was a wild country virgin, an unbreakable Hendaye virgin of a girl! And she was killing a snake, but not an ordinary snake: it was, of course, the serpent from the beginning. She was crushing it with her bare feet which were bloodied and had fangs broken off in them. She had the snake now, burst and smashed and stark-eyed; she had it near dead. The serpent's lips were foam-flecked, but so were the virgin's. There were comic elements to the strong carving: comic statues of the Blessed Virgin are not unknown in the south of France, but this murderous glee was completely unknown elsewhere, except perhaps in the living original. But nobody seeing this could not see the towering importance of the battle between the two, and the forever present time of it.

"We have her, they have the snake," Jane Blaye said. "I will bet on us in the long finality; with my body and soul I will bet on it."

The other artwork was a rough peasant painting of Christ coming through the wall. The doors were closed and bolted in that room, and He was coming through the wall. And the first words He would utter would be "Peace be to you!" But Oh it would be an enigmatic and contradictory peace and a long time coming! There were things in that rough painting too profound for any peasant to have conceived; there were other things there that were possible only from the wholeness of a peasant's mind and hand. The man who had done that one had been a peasant, but also he had been things other than a peasant.

The third noteworthy thing in the angry shrine was not exactly a piece of peasant art, and yet almost certainly it was of peasant formation. It was a human skull.

"When they murdered him, they hacked it off and took it with them," Jane Blaye said. "So his body received Christian burial, but his head had not yet. I received it back from them exactly one year later. They flung it (fleshless by then) through my window at night, hoping to frighten me from harboring certain persons I even then had hidden. They did not frighten me. They brought me consolation. I don't know how I lived that one year without something of him.

"Dana, I will tell you this, he had so much in his head! He had more than any other man I have ever known or heard of. He had hardly begun to communicate it, but even so he had set many a man on fire with it. The truth he had may be meant to be withheld from us or given only a little bit at a time. I really believe he had too much of it. But we haven't enough of it, now that he is gone. I get a little from him yet. It may be that you can get some. Stay here and talk to him for the while, Dana. I have so few visitors who know how to talk to him."

Jane Blaye went out and closed the door behind her, leaving Dana with the three strong objects in the angry shrine. And really, how does one talk to a skull?

"Old *cloigeann*, old *hjerneskal*, old *schedel*, old *crâne*, old *calavera*, what is it with me and thee?" Dana clowned. "It's that I always loved an open-minded man. Aye, and a silent one. And you are both."

Then Dana himself fell silent. Something seemed to creep from the skull that was the very opposite of spookiness. It was a deep sanity. The man named Blaye, whoever or whatever he was, had indeed had very much in his head. He hadn't been able to communicate the large part of it, and yet he had set several men on fire. He set Dana Coscuin to smoldering now. There was something in the skull of the man named Blaye that was at least as fundamental as anything that would be encountered in the Carlist Hills. There was contradiction and riddle, but there was also sanity. Some of the murderous glee of the wooden statue of the Blessed Virgin was in the skull also. Some of the peaceful fury of Christ Coming Through the Wall was there. They hadn't killed Blaye entirely. If they'd wanted him to stay dead, they should not have brought his skull back.

Not so hard to talk to a skull at all! Dana and Blaye said certain things to each other, just as Dana and Blaye's daughter, the dumb girl who was called Sainte Erma, had said certain things to each other.

From some distance, certainly outside the room and probably outside the building, someone was calling "Dana, Dana Coscuin,"

in a voice Dana had never heard. He held some further communication with Blaye and then went out to see who was calling.

"If you do go," Jane Blaye said as she intercepted him in the main room, "and if they try to kill you, break away from them and come back to Hendaye. Louder, piper, louder! We will not hear the call when it comes."

The horn-piper was playing *Ride the Wild Mares* now, a very rough dance. The lads and men vaulted onto the backs and shoulders of the girls and rode them like wild mares. And the girls whirled about as if to throw the men off.

The two English ladies returned, laughed, and entered. A young man went to them immediately and mounted the merry shoulders of one of them. 'twas Dana who did it.

"Dana, Dana Coscuin," the unknown far voice was calling again.

"You do not hear the caller," Jane said when she had the opportunity to talk to Dana again. "You do not hear anything. You are here present and there is no need for you to go further."

"Who is the caller?" Dana asked. "Who will the caller be, since even the widows of Hendaye know more about my fate than I do?"

"It may be the old soldier," Jane said. "It may be the simple-minded fisherman. It may be the Blind Woman, or it may be the false Blind Woman. Dana, when I had him alive, my man had all the green answers inside his head. But he was killed, and many of the answers are still locked away. Were you able to get anything from him?"

"Yes. Something. But is it not an uncatholic thing to keep his skull here?"

"No, it is not an uncatholic thing to keep it. What he had in his head is still unfinished."

"Dana, Dana Coscuin," came a high voice from outside the back door.

"It's the Blind Woman who isn't blind," Jane said. "Do not go."

"She comes here directly to me."

"Remember Jane Blaye," said Jane, "that she will not allow you to be killed in Hendaye if you can get back here."

"Dana Coscuin," called the false Blind Woman, and she was inside and came right to them.

"What is it, Blind Woman?" Dana asked her. "Shall I ride you for a wild mare?"

"I would let you, Dana my love. But take this." She gave Dana a small heavy leather sack. "It is from the Count Cyril," the false Blind Woman said. "Now go to Pamplona."

The false Blind Woman left Dana then and mingled with the dancers as if looking for someone with eyes that couldn't see.

"Dana, go ask my man's head what to do," Jane Blaye said.

"I have asked him," Dana replied. "He said to go."

The false Blind Woman was calling again.

"Kemper Gruenland," she called, and big Kemper came immediately. She also gave him a small heavy leather sack.

"It is from the Count Cyril," she said. "Now go to Cagliari."

Big Kemper, quicker to obedience than Dana, went out immediately without speaking to anyone. He took the long east road towards the Mediterranean and towards Cagliari. And Kemper and Dana would not see each other again for several years.

Before Kemper Gruenland had gone a hundred steps, he was joined by Jude or Judas Revanche, the squarish bearded man, the charcoal-burner who had made the sign with the edge of his hand across his throat at Dana Coscuin.

"Blind Woman," the black man named Charley Oceaan was asking. "Have you an instruction for me?"

"No. I don't know you," the woman said.

"Then you are not who you seem."

Dana Coscuin was laggard. He did not immediately take the Spanish road to Pamplona. Oh, it was clear enough where the road went—from Hendaye to nearby Irún in Spain, and then to San Sebastián. And then it went inland by a mountain road to Pamplona. Dana Coscuin had money. He could even take the Pamplona coach once he got to San Sebastián, and he could walk to San Sebastián by dark. But he didn't go immediately, in spite of the clear instructions from the false Blind Woman.

He stayed for a while in the unmodish seamen's place of Jane Blaye. He watched and heard the carnal horn-piper instigate the Nine Waves Dance, the Over and Under Dance, and Country Thrones; dances and antics that made the Unbreakable Dolls and Mountain Bridges and Wild Mares seem tame.

Abruptly he embraced Jane Blaye, and her mute daughter Sainte Erma, and the large and handsome Margaret Gretz who had been sweetheart of Kemper Gruenland. Then he went out from the place and left them all there.

He walked in the roads and on the beach, and counted the eyes that were on him.

"The competition for Irish recruits must be extreme," he said to himself, "and I am honored that I should be of such importance that men should order my death before I am even begun. I am not

such as needs to be warned of these things. Even Jane Blaye did not give me this word of warning. She knows that I would be worthless if I needed it. But, as to my own appearance, she told me that she had put in the pack a cap named *gorra*. It is almost my life for that cap. And the two sheep men who argued so drunkenly about the details of the San Sebastián road: since they were not drunk, that possibly was for my benefit."

Dana went into a more modish place than Jane Blaye's to take his evening meal and to be seen. This was the more cosmopolitan place where resort visitors and travelers-in-funds might be expected to dine. Here were not to be found the raunchy happy Hendaye girls. Which of these fine ladies here would ...? Oh, two perhaps, or one.

For the two English ladies who had been to Jane Blaye's were here and were dining with Englishmen. One of them, recognizing Dana, smiled covertly at him. It was near sundown, time for the true Blind Woman herself to come with her message, if she had not been anticipated by the false Blind Woman, if there were indeed a true Blind Woman.

Then one of the Englishwomen came over and sat with Dana.

"I am Elaine Kingsberry," she said. "Isn't it sufficient introduction that you have already ridden on my shoulders and that I know they call you Dana My Love? Whatever did you make of that madhouse we were in today?"

"It was a sane house, Elaine, the house of Jane Blaye, full of sane men and women. The proof is that their laughter and their vitality was greater than here."

"That was Jane Blaye's house?" Elaine asked. "I came to Hendaye partly to meet Jane Blaye. But if such things as happened in her house were reported of South Sea Islanders, would you believe them?"

"No, Elaine, they haven't sufficient sanity for such things. Nor have enough of us."

"Dana, Dana Coscuin," the Blind Woman was calling outside the window, almost too faintly even for Dana's hearing.

The black man named Charley Oceaen was also dining in this place. He had talked Dutch at Jane Blaye's. Now he talked English with Englishmen.

"Dana, you are in trouble," Elaine said. "Do you know the name Ifreann?"

"Am I Irish for nothing? Ifreann is Hell, a well-defined place."

"But there is a man who uses it for a name, a Polish man, I believe, and the word apparently isn't Polish. You have not heard of him?"

"No, I have not."

"But you argued with one of his dogs in the road, a bearded man, a sometime killer."

"It is no matter. He took the other direction. There are other eyes on me."

"Dana, Dana Coscuin," the Blind Woman called faintly again. "It was not I before. You must not go to Pamplona by the direct road."

"You may help me by being with me, Elaine," Dana said. "In a moment we will stroll out of here together and we will walk about the sundown town. And then I will leave you quickly but quietly."

"Let us go back to Jane's madhouse again," Elaine said. "How is a girl to be improperly used in this place? A lady could hardly hold a gentleman on her lap here without someone taking it wrong."

"Dana, Dana Coscuin," the Blind Woman still called faintly outside the window.

"I knew it was not you before," Dana raised his conversational voice towards the window. "And I know that I must find a more devious way to Pamplona or wherever I go. Thank you."

"My man Dana, who are you talking to?" Elaine Kingsberry asked, puzzled.

"To the Blind Woman," Dana said simply. "Come along, Elaine."

They walked out of the place together. It was just sundown.

"Charley, Charley Ocean," the Blind Woman was calling faintly under another window.

Dana and Elaine walked several squares together. Dana kissed her as if they were great friends. Then he left her quickly and quietly.

Elaine stood puzzled. Then she returned, not to the modish place where she had been dining, but to the madhouse, to the sanity-house run by Jane Blaye. Ah, there was something else working here. And Elaine Kingsberry had come to Hendaye partly to meet Jane Blaye.

And Dana Coscuin walked more rapidly than he appeared to be. There is a curious gait that venturesome men sometimes use. The same gait will take one along quite rapidly or quite slowly as the occasion requires. He was quickly on the road towards Irún and San Sebastián, the little West Road out of Hendaye. He felt himself followed, and he went a half-mile. He saw the other man ahead. And he saw the draw or *ruisseau* gully between. He whistled loudly. He knew that his fair hair was like a beacon in the still strong light. He strode down into that gully with his shrill whistling and his white-flame hair.

Then his whistling was cut off sharply and he was heard no more.

So then let those who had set to take him and trap him be themselves set down for bunglers. They should have sent wiser men to take him. In the lesser light of the draw, Dana Cosuin hooked with his arm a mountain pack that a lady had fixed for him while he was still on the high seas. He kissed lips that he barely saw. And then he was traveling on a no-path back within thirty degrees of the direction he had come.

"The *gorra*," he thought, and his fingers found it at once. With this big cap, his fair hair was no longer a beacon. Immediately he had the *alpargata* sandals on, he had the wine-skin and the blanket and the sack a-sling, he had the American pistol stuck in his belt. He looked like a Pyrenees mountain man now, and he was traveling through the near dark with three other Pyrenees mountain men who talked the Basque which Dana understood even less than French or Spanish. These men understood his plight.

"God bless Jane Blaye," Dana said in his own tongue and heart. She had provided everything.

At about ten of the night Dana left the three camouflaging men and went on alone, knowing little more than the directions, which he would always know.

III

DEATH DANGER, DANA

Dana was in the high hills behind the French town of St. Jean de Luz and was quite near the Spanish border. He would not cross here, however.

It was dark. The moon would rise only a little bit before dawn, and Dana traveled on until dawn exactly. Then he stopped in a rock shelter on the crest. He could see everything here, and he could not be seen from under his rock ledge. He made a breakfast of bread and cheese and sausage and wine. He put everything in ready order. He went to sleep. He slept. He slept ...

... and woke when it was very close to noon. A blue-eyed girl (should there be eyes that blue in the Pyrenees?) was making her own lunch from Dana's mountain pack, and was watching him out of those damnable sky-colored eyes. How could Dana have been slipped up on, he whose ears never slept? The girl had Dana's wine-skin. And his sack with the bread and cheese and sausage. But did she have—?

"I have your American pistol," the girl said in a lilting sort of French. Her eyes were roguish and dancing. She was very slim, trim and pretty, but she was not small. She was beautifully catlike in her motions and in her instant wariness, and there was the suspicion of unusual strength in her. She belonged in the mountains; she was at home here, that was clear. But she would have graced any salon in the world just as she was.

"I share your food merely to be friendly," the girl said. "Surely you will want to be friendly with me. My name is Magdalena Brume and—"(she pronounced it Magdalena and not Magdalena, and surely she must have known how to *pronounce* her own name) "—and you have no name in your things at all, and no papers whatever in them that I can find. Have I missed something in them? Shall we be the best of friends?"

She sat on her heels, seeming poised to spring.

"Give me back my American pistol and we will be the best of friends, Magdalena," Dana said. His voice sounded a little funny to

himself and his breath played him tricks. This girl would set any blood to racing. She was ambivalent. She would have killed him quickly, it seemed, on impulse. It may already have been close.

"I will not give it back, and I will shoot you in the head if you reach for it precipitously," the girl said. "Why can you not be friendly without these conditions? What is your name?"

"My name would mean nothing to you," Dana said.

"Your name would mean everything to me," Magdalena smiled the words. She had a willful mouth. "How can you be my dear friend when I do not know your name? You are a new man in the mountains, so it is time that you declare yourself a person here and be known by your name."

Dana had rolled up onto one knee. He measured with his eyes his American pistol on the ground near the girl.

"About seven feet and a third more, from your eye to the pistol," Magdalena smiled to Dana's thought question. "French measure. Yours may be slightly different. Do not do it. I don't know how fast you are but I know how fast I am. I would not like to kill you. I want you to be my friend."

Oh the deceit of this girl! It was not the black deceit of the evil people. It was more like the golden deceit of Aileen Dinneen the Irish cousin. It was the curling, laughing, manifold, friendly deceit. This girl would not kill Dana yet. She had assured herself of something that he didn't quite understand. She didn't even want him to believe that she would kill him. She wanted him to make a game of it when she gave him the opening, and she wanted him to understand exactly when she was giving him the opening.

She tilted her head slightly away, smiling. She turned a little, sitting on her heels. She went onto one knee on the grass. She pivoted away from Dana, watching with a backward look.

"You were sleeping so sweetly," she said, "and it was after your first night in the mountains. You are like a boy: will they make some sort of soldiering man out of you?" She was on her hands and knees now, turned away from him and watching him over her shoulder, but with one hand very close to the American pistol. (Ah, Dana you are being distracted. You have not learned it yet.)

"You will tell me your name," she said, "or I will make up a name for you."

She had said she didn't know how fast he was. She wanted him to be fast because she liked fast men. Dana struck quicker than Magdalena's blue eyes could blink, outreaching her for the pistol, coming down heavily on her back and collapsing her onto her face and belly; then he turned her over and pinned her down by

lying on top of her.

"Why, how nervous you are, little Irishman," she said surprisingly in English. "I would have given it back to you anyhow, but it is so much more exhilarating to let you take it. Oh my friend, is it not luxurious to lie on top of Magdalena Brume? Tell us your name, friend."

"Tell us your name, friend," a man echoed in heavy French.

"Oh my friend, Oh how twice nervous you are," Magdalena was laughing. "How you started! It is only my husband. It is not as if a stranger had found you atop me here."

Dana rose to face the most formidable, the ugliest man he had ever seen in his life. The formidable ugly man was grinning, however.

"You have risen needlessly, boy," he said pleasantly. "I myself have to pin her down whenever I want to have meaningful words with her. But you will have to tell us your name."

"Dana Coscuin," Dana said softly.

"Yes, that is one of the names I hold in my mind," the man said. "Have you ever heard of a man named Ifreann?"

"Once."

"You could not have. There is no possible way you could have heard of him. Ah, this man intends to have me killed. I am a little nervous about that, but not very nervous. I am careful, though. Yours is one of the names I hold in my mind, of a young man who might or might not get through to them, who might or might not be of some worth if he did get through. I am not one of them myself but I know them. I am of myself. I have not decided whether it is better to burn down the world with green fire or with red. I am not even certain that it is necessary to burn down the world. I am Malandrino Brume. Stay with us for several days. There are things that we will have to teach you."

Dana Coscuin stayed with Malandrino and Magdalena Brume for three days. He learned things that they meant to teach him, and things that they did not believe were teachable. He learned the amazing things about the two of them together.

There was a passion between those two that was unaccountable, that was unique in its clearness and power, that was absolutely direct and faithful, that was so strong that it almost threatened to consume them. She was as beautiful a woman as was to be found anywhere; he was, no doubt at all about it, the ugliest man in the world. Her love for him was all but incandescent, and was matched only by his cosmic passion and love for her. Their relationship was compounded of much good humor, good health and good wit. It went beyond all its parts. It

was like nothing else in its time.

Neither of these persons would ever be able to do an unkind thing. There is reason to believe that they sometimes had to kill in Brume's dimly understood multinational business. There is a certainty that they sometimes had to rob selected persons and destroy selected property. They were fearless and widely feared. But they were incapable of any unkindness.

The two Brumes were physically perfect. They were like primordial creatures. Brume was of consummate strength and physical craft and speed and balance. His ugliness was simply something archaic and primeval. Magdalena, who was trim and pretty but not small, was beautifully cat-like in her motions, was stronger than a Hendaye girl and more graceful than any girl anywhere.

A perfect couple, the Brumes, but were they not as confused in their understanding as are some of the imperfect people?

"We return to the shaggy age," Malandrino Brume lectured Dana as they lay in rock-shade one noontime. "The bearded men reappear in the world in this nineteenth century, and I am one of them. The bearded thoughts also appear. This isn't to say that the thoughts are old. Most of them are youthful, but deformed (I admit it) and shaggy almost beyond the hope of order. The rational age has cracked wide open with the realization that man is not a rational apparatus. He is a stolid animal, or he is an hysterical ghost, or he is an effete avatar; but he is not a reasoning machine. But should we not respect and strive for reason? For reason in grace, yes. For reason out of grace, no.

"Soldier Coscuin, it is not the question whether there will be Revolution in Europe. What is this Revolution, a hundred-year-old foetus that we should doubt whether it has ever been born yet? No, the Revolution is the oldest and most creaking thing in the world, a gray man-image that renews himself always with difficulty. The only question is whether this phase of the Revolution will be red or black, or white or gold or green."

"Pick a color, dear Dana, and hang it on your heart," Magdalena smiled an interruption in that exquisite voice that always set the blood stirring.

"For all the nameless saints of Ireland, my color will have to be green," Dana said. "Were it not so, it would have to be blue. Is there a Blue Revolution?"

"Blue is in the Tricolore," Brume said. "There is the red for the blood of Christ, the blue for the eyes of my wife, the white for the innocence that must come back to us. The Tricolore has generally failed, in the same sense that everything has generally failed."

"Ah well, what is the Green Revolution that I may become attached to it?" Dana asked him.

"In the Carlist Hills you will be indoctrinated with the Black Revolution, and just the veriest touch of the Green," Brume said. "I myself would join the Green Revolution—were it in existence to be joined. But the Green is no more than a hope only, a thin hope, and it breaks away into sea-green, eel-green, monster-green. The thing about it, Dana, is that it hasn't been formulated yet, and it may never be."

"Not formulated at all, Brume?" Dana asked.

"Only in scraps, by outlandish and contradictory people, Cobbett and Cobden in England, Ozanam and Buchez and Blaye and Cheve in France, August Olt in Alsace, the young Archbishop of Damiata who is named Vincent Pecci, and—"

"Who is this Blaye?" Dana asked.

"Christian Blaye of Hendaye, murdered in Toulouse," Brume said.

"Is it possible that Dana has come by way of Hendaye?" Magdalena laughed. "It is more than possible (I see it in his eyes now) that Dana has entered in collision with the widow Jane Blaye, that he has enjoyed the racy hospitality of her house and tavern, that he has encountered an enormous earthiness there. But must not the Green Revolution be earthy in its sustaining?"

Dana never did understand the Brumes fully. The heavy French of Malandrino and the light French of Magdalena were of different regions. What English phrases Magdalena knew were comic or stereotyped ones. But Brume would place a big vital hand on Dana's shoulder when the comprehension was slow, and some degree of understanding did seem to flow from the big hand. Magdalena would shake Dana roughly by the shoulders and kiss him full on the mouth when he didn't seem to understand her completely.

Brume taught Dana the complete geography of the mountains in the days he was with them, and much of the geography of the adjacent countries. He told him the names of several hundred men and what they stood for. He taught him weaponry beyond what Dana had known. But which of them taught the other the most about hand combat is doubtful. Brume was extraordinarily strong, but Dana was sly and fast; Brume was not beyond the years of learning.

"Magdalena would not ordinarily have abused you and played tricks on you at your first coming," Brume said on the last full day that Dana was with them. "It was a peculiar case, and we had to know who you were. A man has been sent to kill us, you see. He is

sent by a man that I call Ifreann the Devil. I know the form and moves of this Ifreann, but I have no description at all of his sent killer. Oh well, he will strike in a night or two. I am world expert on these things, with senses that never sleep. Is there any man expert enough to slip up on me? I don't know. I will see very soon."

Rough Brume was a wood carver. He had carved a yard-tall statue of the Blessed Virgin and had set in blue pebbles for the eyes. The eyes of the statue were really those of Magdalena. In fact, the entire statue was the same time the Blessed Virgin and Magdalena.

Brume had also carved a crucifix of great power, passion and brutality. It is possible that Brume had not always been a mountain man even though the mountains were now an extension of his body.

"You have had it too easy, Soldier Coscuin," Brume said to him once. "You have slipped and side-stepped your great testings again and again. It is good to be able to do this, but you have to be blooded if you are to be a soldier."

"I have been blooded before, I have been a soldier before," Dana told Brume.

"I believe that if Dana has collisions only with the ladies he will always win," Magdalena teased with her golden voice. "I suspect that he has conquered the widow Jane Blaye in a dozen ways. I know that he has conquered me in a hundred. Now this is good training for one who takes the back road into the Carlist Hills. There is another lady that he will meet before he fully comes into those hills. She is ambivalent, and a man could die from her. Nobody ever passes into those hills without encountering her; nobody has ever conquered her."

"She is no lady. She is a cheap honey jade," Brume growled.

"She is death-danger to you, Dana my love, and we will not even tell you her name or her sign," Magdalena chided. "But if you die because of her, remember that you were warned."

It was the third night that Dana had been with the Brumes. He slept under a high rocky ledge, and they were under another fifty feet away from him. Dana intended to leave the Brumes but he did not know quite how to mention the matter. He was in love with their power and depth, but he had his own times and roads to follow.

"I will leave then in the night and they will understand," he said to himself. "There is no clear way to leave good friends without spoiling it."

His blanket was rolled. He lay on the naked stones, and there are certain vibrations that only naked stones can give. He had his hand-knife in his hand, everything else was rolled into his roll.

He dozed, and he hadn't intended to. There were vibrations and emanations in his shallow sleep that didn't belong there. "It is a weasel after the poultry," he said in half-sleep. He could feel the threat of it. "It is no small weasel," he said then, and stirred a little.

He could feel prowling murder emanating from the ground and the naked stones. He studied the stars, and it was the time he had intended to rise. He studied the wind, and he rose very cannily.

"It is no weasel after the geese," he then said. "It is a night murderer after my own hosts."

Dana snaked his way around a rock shoulder. He set his own emanations and vibrations into the bones of those hills. He felt the signal of his own disturbance go out from him, and he felt the other disturbance altered. The strange prey or preyer was highly sensed and alert. This would be quiet and dangerous.

They were so near to each other that they could hear each other's blood. Dana felt fear and anger come from the stranger, and his own aura must have conveyed the same.

Ah, a jangle of muted metal on rock, a bone-handled knife, and Dana answered it with the scrape of his own knife. Then the dim *ring of pistol on stone*, but Dana did not have his own at hand to answer it. This was all subtle empty boasting. The man was not likely to shoot. He found himself between two jaws and he knew that Dana was not his assigned target (they were so close that they were reading each other's minds). He could also hear the breaths and the blood of the Brumes.

And Dana had an advantage equal to the gun in the invader's hand. He could cry out and awaken the Brumes and box the raider in. Dana could also withdraw no more than his own length, be better (indeed perfectly) shielded, and have his own pistol in hand in a moment. Or Dana could—

On him! Dana was borne down and knifed through by sudden savage attack. Dana had too many advantages to be permitted the advantage of first strike. The invader had stabbed Dana deep with a cut that scraped his left clavicle and buried itself between shoulder and neck. And the invader had cuffed Dana's own knife wrist for the moment, as had Dana his.

Time was against Dana here. He was hurt and he was underneath, and the hand with which he cuffed the invader's knife wrist was the hand of the now mangled shoulder. He could hardly prevent the man's withdrawing of the knife and further

stabbing.

There was a death temptation to cry for rough Brume. It was resisted. Brume, for all his friendliness, still regarded Dana as a boy. Dana would be a man in this, even if a dead man.

One death-trick that is born in the blood—to hold the knife within one's wound and refuse to release it. A spasmodic clenching of the body muscles on the deep driven dagger—the attacker fumbling in his effort to withdraw it, even after Dana had released the knife-wielding wrist.

Dana now had two hands on his own knife. He shifted it to his own weaker hand and drove it upward. There was a spasm in the body of the overlying man. Dana, with both hands on his own knife, drove it deep through the belly and up into the rib cage. But the dying man finally freed his own knife and slashed Dana from scalp to chin with his last act.

Dana flung the man off. With a second stroke he removed all doubt that the man's life was gone. He rolled the man around and took a packet from him which certainly contained papers and probably money. He doused his own wounds with wine.

The dead man appeared to be a sleek dangerous hunter, and Dana shivered for his own saved life. What sort of man was Ifreann who used such strikers as Jude Revanche and this dead man?

Dana went and stood over the sleeping Brumes and gloated a little. Even the wariest must fall into deep sleep sometime, and who can mock them for it?

"You were sleeping so sweetly," he said as if giving Magdalena's words back to her, "as if it were your first night in the mountains." And she *was* sleeping sweetly.

"And you are the world expert on these things, with senses than never sleep," Dana mocked the sleeping Malandrino Brume. Brume was sleeping deeply and powerfully. Dana loved these two persons whom he had just saved, and this made a rather sharp night-going of it.

Dana lay down on top of the sleeping Magdalena and kissed her strongly upon the face and mouth. She partially returned his kisses, but she did not waken. He lay upon her and soaked her hair and head and face and neck and breasts and entire upper body with his blood. Ah, what a sticky red joke he was playing on the sleeping beauty! He laughed then, and his own pain became a sort of rending pleasure upon her. He loved this as an elaborate jest; and Magdalena would love it in the morning, after she had seen what had happened in the night and that it was not Dana who was dead, and after she had realized with blue-eyed delight

what outrageous calling card he had left upon her. He kissed her bloodied mouth with great passion; then he rose from her.

Turning to her husband, Dana cuffed Malandrino Brume and thumped him upon his mighty chest. "Good-bye, old man," he said. "I leave you now." And Malandrino Brume was still sleeping deeply and powerfully. Dana gave Brume a resounding slap on the haunch.

"Sleep, you two saints, sleep till the sun gets in your eyes," he said.

Dana had been almost quiescent for some days, allowing substance to be poured into him by various strong people. Now he would begin to pour out his own strength.

He swung his gear and started with painful laughter to find his way down the southern slope of the mountain to Spain.

Three days later, having been in and out of Pamplona where he had gleaned information without mortal encounter, Dana was singing his way down a mule-road in Northern Spain, which might or might not take him to the town of Estella.

My Name is Dana Coscuin was the name of his own loud song, and he sang it boldly for all the world to hear. He had proclaimed himself to the world.

Certainly the six-inch-deep knife wound had not been healed in three days, nor had the great ragged slash on his face. But Dana had sloshed wine immediately into his wounds, and he had been blessed with curative magic when he lay atop Magdalena Brume and imbibed grace from her and covered her with his blood for a sign. Moreover, Dana had had his wounds cleaned and bound by a doctor in Isaba before he had come to Pamplona.

He now had garbled passwords and places stored in his head. He had begun to unravel the configuration of men and movements. He knew the several different places he could go for fundamental forming, and the several other places he could go for Spanish fun.

Dana now wore the brightest green shirt in the world. He had bought it from a Gypsy: he had bought three of them, but the one he wore was even brighter than the two brothers. If anyone could not see Dana coming along the mule-road, then he was blind to the color green. If anyone could not hear him coming along that road, then he was deaf in his ears. Dana maintained in his sudden sunlit jollity that he was Ireland's gift to Spain and to the whole Continent.

He did not yet know who he worked for or what his job was, nor where he should go, nor what side he was on: but those little gaps in his information would be filled in quite soon.

He had met and defeated all but one of the early predicted perils. There was one more thing that his advising saint, the blue-eyed Magdalena, had warned him of. Well then, he would save the warning till he should come to the thing.

It was clear to him, though, just as such things are always clear in the old tales, that this peril was upon him now in most unsuspected form.

A lady, who was indeed dressed as a lady, was standing in an anxious manner on the edge of the mule-road ahead. Her gown was of the dark brown color that the Carmelites wear, but it was stuff too fine for poor Carmelites. Her shoulder-piece was ivory-colored and rich, and it was gathered in by a finely gloved hand. Her coif was gray, and barely missed being lilac or purple. There were other fine things about this lady, bright extra things such as are not worn by the ladies of Bantry Bay at least. Oh, the cream-colored gloves on her hands!

Dana knew who she was: not by description, for she had not been described to him; not by name, for he did not yet know her name. But he knew who she was.

"Good day, my lady," Dana said when he had come up to her, "my name is Dana Coscuin and I am the pride of Ireland in these parts." Dana had always a breezy chivalry with even the finest ladies.

"Young man," the lady said (but she was no older than Dana), "go at once to that castillo in the valley below and have them send a carriage up for me. I am wearied."

"I do not know whether my road winds past that valley house or not," Dana said. "If it does, then I will have them send the carriage up for you."

"Young man—" the lady said with some annoyance now—and then she scalded him in a high and pretty voice. The meaning of her torrid outburst was not clear. How many successive sentences of Spanish should Dana be expected to understand? The lady was displeased, and she flushed beautifully in her anger.

'Speak to me, Magdalena, my saucy saint,' Dana said in his under-voice to his beloved patron in the mountains. 'Did you not warn me of this very one, and tell me that I was forewarned?'

"Young man," the displeased lady said to Dana again, and then she said other things. There was something overly sly about this lady. She was not particularly displeased really. It was an easy act with her. She was appraising Dana, she was measuring and dealing for him, she was counting coup on him.

Then a thing happened that is completely without explanation.

Dana Coscuin, always so courteous to ladies of whatever sort, committed a series of acts so startling and so removed from his regular character that there is no accounting for them. He was seized either by total madness or by sanity on a plane that is canted in regard to our own. In some way, the lady had the aspect of a snake or of some thing worse than a snake. And all the while she was one of the genuinely pretty ladies of the world.

Dana caught the lady by the hair of her head and began to drag her about the road by it. "The hair at least is real," he said loudly, "even if the girl is not." But he continued to drag her.

With gleeful fury he flung her on her back in the roadway there. There was no fear in the lady's eyes: only defiance and—what?—yes, a touch of amusement. Have snakes always responded so disconcertingly?

Dana stood upon the girl with one foot on her mound and the other on her throat.

'Nobody has ever conquered her,' Magdalena Brume had once said of this very nameless lady. 'It may not be,' Dana said to himself now, 'but I have scored first discomfit on her.'

There was murderous glee in Dana, and momentarily it was the false snake itself that he ground under his heels.

"You will really injure me," the lady spoke with some strain, since her throat was still under Dana's heel. It couldn't be that the lady in her extreme straits was laughing at Dana with her eyes. No, it must be that the eyes of Spanish ladies and Spanish snakes differ from other eyes.

"Stand off me, man," the lady said in a small voice now, "and I will do anything you say."

"Get up then, and disrobe," Dana told her.

The lady, the girl, disrobed smoothly and quietly, letting her clothing fall in the dust of the road, and stepping clear of them. Dana began to wonder who had really scored discomfit here. The girl was slim and brown, muscled smoothly like a boy, and yet quite breasty, and boned like a young woman. She still wore her gloves, a supreme elegance by which she already partly defeated Dana.

'She is no lady, she is a cheap boney jade,' rough Brume had once said of this very girl here. It may have been so. Or it may have been that rough Brume had never seen this girl in her bones.

'She is death-danger to you, Dana my love,' Magdalena had once said of this same girl. And Magdalena of the Mountain was to be trusted such as are no more than three saints in Heaven.

The girl's back was empurpled with old scars. She had been whipped, scourged almost to death at some time.

"Take off your gloves," Dana said, and the girl dropped her gloves in the dust. Aye, she had once been hanged up by the thumbs and beaten.

But where was the death-danger from this bare girl? Dana went through the clothes in the dust of the road. He looked at the girl.

"You have nothing hidden?" he asked.

"What would I hide?"

"Robe yourself again then." But the girl found combs with her clothes and was fixing her hair first.

"Dana Coscuin," she said, "dine with me one month from this evening."

"In that house in the valley?"

"In my castle in the valley."

"It may be that I will dine elsewhere that evening."

"It will be that you will dine in my castillo that evening, or I will have you found and dragged there."

Dana Coscuin was singing his way along a mule-road in north Spain, and the road might or might not take him to the town of Estella. *My Name is Dana Coscuin* was the name of the song, and Dana sang it boldly for all the world to hear. But he sang it not quite so boldly as he had sung it a little earlier.

He felt that he had been neatly defeated by a young girl in her bare brown skin. That the girl had been snakeish now seemed like a crooked noon-dream. He did not even know the name of this girl, but many persons must know it. How was it that nobody had ever passed into the Carlist Hills without encountering her? And how was it that nobody had ever conquered her?

And Dana still could not explain his rough and unusual behavior towards the girl.

IV

HIGH HILARITY, BLOOD AND DEATH

Dana was finally in the high Carlist Hills. He was on the mountain there that is highest of any in the world except Ararat, and is only one cubit less high than that. He was quite near the place where a great arm, hand, and flag, all turned to stone, might still be seen. And the flag was, of necessity, the Carlist flag. He was at the Rock that was clearly fundamental, though that first Spanish stranger had admitted that it might be fundamentally wrong.

A man, who was either an old bandit or an old priest, was instructing Dana Coscuin and several other young men in a keep of tall rocks that was not far from the town of Estella in Northern Spain. The old man was dressed in black, and the young men called him the Black Pope.

"We have the odd cases of unimportant things giving their names to more important things that extend hundreds and even thousands of years before them," the old man was saying. "We have, for instance, the case of the name 'America' which is given to the Western Continents. It is said to have been named for an Italian man of little more than three hundred years ago. Yet the Western Continent had been known by its own name for more than two thousand years. The Greeks called it Amoiro-Ge, the unlucky land or the unlucky world. The Latins called it Amaraqua, the bitter land. The Irish called it Amharc, a sight or a vision.

"It is much the same with the Carlist thing which we propound and sustain. There are some who say that Carlist is named for some Charles or other who was king or who aspired to be king in a somewhat recent time. But the Mountain named Carlit has had its same name for half the age of the earth, and it is a high-rising monarch of our Carlist Hills. But do you know that in the Caucasus Mountains there is another manifestation of this mountain and that it is also named Carlit? Did you know that in ancient times in the Caucasus there was a realm named Iberia which is also the same name as our own realm? Did you know

that these two realms were joined underneath the earth by a tunnel sixteen hundred miles long? And that these two mountains were but two of many peaks of the same great mountain?

"Do you know that in the Slavic tongue a *Karlik* is a dwarf? It is, however, a massive and ponderous dwarf, larger than a giant. It is the Mountain Dwarf. I myself am of this *Karlik* blood. We will maintain and spread this strong Mountain Thing with its beliefs and its insights.

"There is a town named Val Carlos in our Carlist Hills. This would seem at first sight to mean Charles Valley. But its real meaning and first form, is Val Charla, the Valley of the Word or the Valley of the Discourse."

"The real meaning and first form of Carlist is Charlatan," one of the other young men mumbled in a low voice to Dana Coscuin.

"The word Carla means a colored cloth, and perhaps it means a flag," the old bandit or old priest went on lecturing. "I suspect that it means the oldest flag in the world. In the sky there is the star-group named the Charles Wain (Osa Mayor, the Big Bear), and it is said to mean Charlemagne's Wagon. But it is the vehicle of a higher King than Charlemagne. This is the vehicle which we in our humble way are called upon to use. And it is also the vehicle of the King of Heaven.

"For the Carlist Thing is the King Thing, the Bold Thing, the Sky Thing. It is the tree with some of its branches in our hills and with its roots in Heaven. Every King is really a King Charles, since Charles means King. But no King will rule us on Earth unless he is in the image of the King Himself. In our codex, variations of the name are often used for those who walk in truth, as Karl, Kirol, Cyril."

It seemed as though a stir of recognition went through several of the young men at the name Cyril.

"Do you know as much and as little about the Count Cyril as I do?" the mumbling young man mumbled to Dana.

"I know my mentor and kinsman quite well," Dana lied, "but in my present—ah—exile, I am not always in touch with him."

"I see that you know as little about him as I do," the mumblor mumbled. There was this thing about the mumblor: he was very tall; he reminded one of a mountain even, with the rockiness of his face and his steep lines, but he had what seemed a low small voice. He was not massive, but he was long and powerful and pinnacled. He was named Tancredi Cima and he was a Sardinian.

"Why Estella?" the old lecturer asked with a sort of ringing bronze that he gave to all his rising intonations. "Why are we

centered in the region of Estella? My young men, I do not know why. The town of Estella and the musty mountains about it are anciently the center of this indoctrination and discipline. The name Estella once meant Star: that one character has been lost out of the name merely indicates how ancient it is. There was a Star here that came down on a Mountain—and what does that mean? It means that all mountaintops are brothers, and that instructions from Heaven are received on the mountaintops only. Indeed, the Arabs call Mount Sinai by the name of Gebel Kharluf or the Carlist Mountain.”

“He is a cheerful liar there,” the mumbler Tancredi mumbled. “Does he believe that all of us are untraveled?”

“The star that is our town cannot be pictured and cannot be seen,” the old man was saying. “It becomes an interior illumination in our flesh. Yes, I know that the star is commonly pictured. Sometimes it is pictured as a five-pointed figure, sometimes as a six-pointed. These are not really representations of stars, though. They are cult figures; they are charms; they are (and this is the truth of it) boxes to catch stars in. In our most peculiar way, and working at it for many centuries, we have been partly successful at catching a star.

“The illumination of the star is one simple bright message: that there is one father, God, and that we are all brothers and sisters, both in blood and in love. Man, who is each man, is made in the Image and is given Dominion. It is required of each man that he rule over himself in justice, and that he rule over the world in justice. If every person were to rule, there would be no conflict. There are as many aspects of the world to be ruled over as there are people in the world. The conflict comes when some person refuses to rule. Each of you, each of everybody, must rule the entire world in the fullness of his own aspect.”

“The Guardia,” Tancredi mumbled, “the guard has come closer than it must be allowed. You and I, Dana, must do something about the guard.” This was when Dana had been in the Carlist Hills for about a month.

Tancredi was not standing near Dana at this lime. He was standing some fifty feet away and there were perhaps a dozen young men lounging in between; but Dana was the only one who heard the mumble. There was (and Dana would discover this again and again) something intensely directional about the puzzling voice of Tancredi Cima. It would go through walls even in the low tone of it; it would fly to the intended ear like a bird.

Tancredi shuffled away from the scene to the old lecturer's left, and Dana Coscuin to his right. They descended by separate paths

from that highest place. They went down opposite cliffs of a gorge; and white horses were traveling on a slippery grassy path below them.

There were seven guards of the Queen's government riding on seven white horses. These guards had traveled in large or small bands into the high Carlist country to intimidate the opposition to the Queen's government for five years. But there had been only an invisible opposition, irregular, relentless, sometimes murderous, always uncanny. Whether it was intimidated by the incursive guards is doubtful.

The guards seldom encountered human persons at all, not on the roads, not in the hills, not even in the towns. All the little houses of the small towns were always closed tight to them; even the loudest knocking and calling would not open any doors or discover any persons, not even at brightest noontime.

There was a discrepancy in the sizes of the settlements and towns. In the larger towns and cities, there were always correct numbers of persons going about their daily business, and these seemed open and respectful of the guards. The people of the cities and the big towns, except Estella, even went out of their way to inform the guards of their total loyalty. But the Carlist opposition did not roost in the cities or even in the larger towns, except Estella.

This opposition was strong but invisible in the small towns, in the farmsteads, in the mountains, in the sheep-hills, in the remnants of the monasteries (some of them had withdrawn from their own destruction up to natural rock walls and caves for their rooms), in the very old and very minor nobility in their small castle-houses, in the lives of mule-drivers and woodcutters. This opposition had a certain wealth that was so well-hidden that the government had never been able to dig it out or confiscate it. And the opposition had a centuries-old stubbornness.

"Really, there are no Carlists left alive in Spain, not one," a government general, one of those charged with the extirpation of the Carlists, had said. "They have left a few ghosts behind them, though, and these give some unease to the faint-hearted."

And two ghosts were descending by opposite cliffs above the heads of seven guardsmen on seven white horses.

"The Carlists are somnolent," another government grandee had said. "They sleep in the high rocks like snakes. Should one come too close and too unwary on them, however, they still strike like snakes, like poisoned lightning."

Like lightning? Not really. Not like swift lightning. Like very slow and sleepy lightning. They were an electrical body and they

were highly charged, but they discharged very casually with their lethal leakage.

It was like lazy lightning that Tancredi and Dana came down the cliffs.

There were seven white-horsed guardsmen, not bunched up to be taken easily, but paced out at intervals, and alert. Seven.

No. Six guardsmen now, and seven horses.

The Carlist instructors had conveyed a great deal. They had been through one mountain war. The older ones of them had been through two. They were canny and competent, like—well, like rough Brume who had once been a Carlist instructor but was now playing a loner hand seventy miles distant. And the recruited young men had brought a great deal with them: Tancredi had, certainly Dana had; and a corpus of tricks and tactics was being created daily.

Five guardsmen riding now. And two of the seven white horses had no riders.

The situation in Spain as to the Government and the Revolution against that Government was unusual. Isabella II was Queen, and she was fifteen years old. Her mother, Maria Cristina, had been regent for most of the twelve years of the reign. Her uncle, Don Carlos, had claimed the throne, and in his behalf one of the Carlist Wars (1834-1839) had been waged. It had been waged badly and it had been lost. Don Carlos had never been a great favorite with the Carlists; he was not near Carlist enough for them. Remember Charles IV. Remember Charles III. They had been Charleses, they had been men.

Four guardsmen riding now, and three of the seven white horses had no riders. Were all the guardsmen fools then, to be knocked off one by one? Not all. An effort was always made to send out at least one competent man with even the smallest patrol. In a seven-man patrol, the competent man usually rode in third place, and he rode there now: third of four, where he had been third of seven. He knew now that something had gotten the last three men, but the man riding behind him didn't know it yet.

The Carlist Revolution (which thrived on defeat) was the upside-down revolution. The Carlists, the rebels, were conservative, monarchical, religious, agrarian, traditional. The reigning Government in Madrid was innovative, anti-religions, shrilly mocking of morality, looting, uprooting; it was many of the things that are commonly called revolutionary.

Maria Cristina, it was said, was depraved. Isabella II, it was said, was precocious from her ninth or tenth year, and the men she was precocious with ruled Spain. The people of Spain did not love

these high women, and they did not love their strong men who really ruled: General Espartero for his long time, and Narvaez after 1843 when the then thirteen year old Isabella was declared of age. In some ways she was certainly of age.

Three guardsmen riding now, and four of the seven white horses had no riders. The third of those guardsmen was plagued by harassing ghosts and by the incompetence of his men. Well, he waited out one of the ghosts and took him at almost the right moment. He shot Dana Coscuin, who turned a faster back to him than you might believe; but he shot him at too great a distance and with *metralla* too light: it was fowling shot, or a little less than fowling shot. The guardsmen sometimes shot recalcitrant peasants in the pants with this light shot, but they did not often kill anybody with it.

Tancredi killed that competent third guardsman, though, and he killed him with heaver shot than fowling shot. These were the only two bits of gunfire in the whole melee.

The first and second guardsmen, riding back with inquiring shouts, were disposed of.

There were six guardsmen trussed and gagged along the way, and each with a small or great concussion. So leave them to be found by someone. And one guardsman was unfortunately dead. Let the perpetual light shine upon him; he was of Christian clay. Tancredi now rode one white horse and he led six others; Dana Coscuin lay in mortal pain across one of them.

Tancredi rode to the most hidden stead in all the high hills. Tancredi's girl friend lived there with her many fathers and uncles and brothers. But, as was usual, only the girl Mariella was at home.

Mariella shut the seven white horses up in a white cave. She took the mortally wounded Dana Coscuin across her shoulders like a long sack of barley, carried him to a shady place, stripped him buff, laid him across her lap, and began to extract the fowling shot or less than fowling shot from his back and rump with *tenacillas* or tweezers. Mariella had often extracted government shot from her fathers and uncles and brothers. In their unspecified business, they very often ran athwart of government men. After Mariella had removed a hundred or so pellets of shot from Dana, it was found that he was not, after all, mortally wounded.

Mariella carried him to a huge barrel of water and dumped him into it. She sloshed him around in it vigorously, churning him up and down in the water by her grip on the hair of his head, kept after it till he was pretty well free of the crusted blood. She lifted

him out then, laid him out on a flat rock, and anointed him with wine, olive oil, and bull grease. She stood him on his feet, dressed him, kissed him, and announced that he was cured forever.

"Mariella is the best in the world at such cures," Tancredi said.

"Mariella is the best in the world at such," Dana agreed.

Dana, who put on a much better appearance than Tancredi, went to sell the seven white horses, riding one, leading six. He went by his own cave on the way and changed to another bright green silk shirt, the one that was brighter than its brothers. When he had done this it was then into the afternoon of the day. He rode with his white steeds the seven miles to the Conde Prado.

The Conde had a good thing going with white horses. When government guards had been accidentally dislodged from their saddles, and when the horses were consequently wandering loose, the Conde would find these horses and convey them back to the government for a fee. The guards' horses were well-known and nobody else would be using them. And this arrangement, so long as there had been no serious accident when the guards had been dislodged from their saddles, was advantageous to everyone. The Conde was of the old nobility, but he had close contacts with the new.

"Dana Coscuin," the Conde said when he had scanned the situation with so close an eye that he made Dana nervous. "I may not buy and sell the same white horse twice within one month. The government buyer, though he is a cousin of mine, becomes very angry at this. You must admit that it is, in the words of the proverb, rubbing their noses in it."

"I have never sold you any of these same white horses before, Conde," Dana swore truthfully to it.

"Another man has sold me one of them within the month, Dana, the one you are riding," the Conde said. "Five others of them I have bought before, but not within the month. The seventh and last one there I have not bought or seen before. He is not quite up to the others in quality. The world wears out, Dana, and white horses are not quite what they used to be."

"Take the six. I'll ride this fine one for a while yet," Dana said.

"With the government saddle and arnés? Do you know what you are about, Dana?"

"No. What am I about, Conde?"

Dana knew very well that there was no rule about not buying the same white horse within one month. The horse he rode was blood-flecked. It had been ridden by the more competent guard who had been killed by Tancredi. Mariella had wanted to scrub

this horse, and Dana had said, no, leave it as it is.

The Conde paid the fee for the six horses.

"Dana, do you remember that you are to dine this evening with my niece?" the Conde asked.

"What? She is your niece? Does that *jumenta* have kindred?"

"Watch your talk, Dana!" the Conde cried angrily. "She is a shy and sheltered girl, and she had the grace to ask you, a stranger, to dine with her. You will speak of her with respect and you will treat her with respect."

A shy and sheltered girl? She whose eyes could turn to serpent eyes in a blinking?

"I will treat her not at all," Dana said. "I will dine with ruder and better people tonight."

"You will dine with her this evening, Dana, or I will have you dragged there. You are alone, and I have men in this place. Moreover, I am only half a government man and only half dissolute. There is also the fact that you have had an encounter today, or you would not have the white horses. You sit on your horse with some pain, I notice that. You are washed and dressed, but blood still comes through and stains the green shirt on you. The horse you ride is blood-flecked, and I worry that it might not all be your blood. I will find out about this. But you are not at your best or your most agile this evening, Dana Coscuin. You can be taken and handled. Go dine with my niece. Go now. You would not like it to be dragged there."

"Ah well, I'll go to her then," Dana said. "I'll be there within the hour."

"And I trust to your native good manners. As I said, my niece, the Condesa Elena Prado y Bosca is a shy and sheltered girl. And remember one thing, Dana, remember it in your blood: I am one of those who shelter her."

So that was her name, Elena Prado. That would be Helen Meadows in English. Aileen Leana it would be in Irish. A wholesome name, surely. And the Conde had spoken with none or small gleam in his eye. Did he really believe that his niece was a shy and sheltered girl?

Dana retraced part of the mule-road that he had walked one day just a month before. He came to the sector where he had dragged Elena about by the hair, where he had thrown her down and stood on her. He rode down to the house, to the Castillo in the valley. He knew now that his curiosity would have brought him here in any case. He knew that he had had this date filed on the inside of his head and that it would have come to the fore even if he had not encountered guards or white horses or the Conde Prado this day.

Shy and sheltered girl, or she-snake, the girl was both, of course. Completely both, two persons in her. This could be as interesting as anything that happened in the Carlist Hills.

The Castillo was larger than it seemed from above, and it was richer. Even the stable boys wore livery. They handled the white horse with government saddle, and they looked at Dana with veiled eyes when they did it. They knew, of course, that this green-shirt was a Carlist, and that the white horse had been robbed from a guard. It may be that they hadn't eyes as sharp as the Conde, though, to know that all the blood on the horse wasn't Dana's.

Into the house then, boldly and without announcement. What, was there a bishop in this house as guest? But was he an old bishop or a new bishop? There were a certain few new Queen's Bishops in the country, men of no religion at all, but with a certain avidity for bishops' incomes, and with a certain charm to give in exchange. This bishop was young, he had a great store of mocking intelligence in his eyes, he looked more French than Spanish, he had an easy worldliness about him—and he was altogether too young to be an old bishop.

And they were all drinking brandy *before* dinner. This was not an old Spanish custom. The bishop was talking in French with a very young dandy, who was, however, Spanish, and they were talking like philosophers.

And there was an *abadesa* there, an abbess, a mother-director of nuns. Here there was no doubt at all: she was a new Queen's Abbess. She showed too much bare neck and shoulder and bosom to be an old abbess, too much ankle and calf. She was painted and curled. She was clearly a loose woman of no religion, but perhaps of considerable income and holding. Her presence bothered Dana more than it would bother a Frenchman or a Spaniard.

Another Conde, another Count besides Prado was there; but was he an old count or a new count? Dana did not understand the Spanish scene well enough to judge. The Conde Prado was both an old and a new count: old in title, new in his dealings and adaptability. This one was less of a man.

There were three young men there (one was the philosopher who talked to the bishop), and three young women, contemporaries of Elena, and all seemingly of the small nobility. And finally there was Tia Teresa, an old aunt or good-woman whose being there made everything as it should be.

The Conde Prado arrived last. He seemed relieved to see that Dana was there. There was something about him—Judas eyes

they are called—that did not usually become him. He had been finding out things and dealing.

Thirteen persons there to dine, and they went in to dine in what to Dana was candle-lit splendor. Ah, there must have been a hundred candles burning there, racked up in threes and fives and sevens and nines in their *portavelas*, all long and white and new and just lighted.

Twelve persons turned to the elegant food, and Dana froze them all at mid-reach. Out of sheer devilry, he called them sternly back to things of God.

“Is Spain no longer a Christian country?” he asked loudly. “With a bishop here, shall the table go unblessed?” The bishop flushed. He was a glib man, and his glibness nearly failed him. But only for an instant. He didn’t quite remember the grace for table, but he did know a rather dirty parody of it. This he began—

—but the Conde Prado cut him off before he had uttered three wrong words. Then the Conde said the correct grace, powerfully, seriously, and with a curious recollected reverence.

“We remember it so seldom,” Elena said when her uncle had completed the grace. “Thank you, Dana. Thank you, my uncle. Hear, all of you: this is my special guest, Count Dana Coscuin of County Kerry in Ireland.”

This was neither the shy and sheltered girl now, nor was it the she-snake. There was real merriment in Elena’s eyes, and the mockery was of a friendly sort.

“That is strange,” the new bishop said. “I know the real Count of Kerry, and it is not this man. I know the real Count from London and Paris and Madrid, but he has told me that he has never set foot in Ireland in his life. I believe that he is wise there. Draw money from the place, yes, but not go there even for money.”

“You, perhaps, mean the Count of the usurping line,” Dana countered the man. “But it is not true that he has never been in Ireland. I have seen him there, and I have never heard of him being out of there. He is, in fact, a seven-year-old boy. I, however, am the Count in the true line. The other, the usurping line, is no more than three hundred and twenty years old.”

Dana could lie as well as a new bishop could. Besides, as in all Bantry Bay families, there was a family legend that the Coscuins were descended from somebody rather high: a count, it may be, or even a king.

And the dinner was good. Roast goose that recalled Bantry Bay to Dana. Had the Irish geese already slipped south to Spain, and the first week of Autumn just past? And if not Irish, how could the goose be so flavored?

There were *galletas*, but not the hard *galletas* that they ate in the Carlist Hills. These were light and godly, Spanish muffins! And honey: had Irish bees flown all the way to Spain? Or had Irish honey been transported? Wine of the Country! It hadn't the elegance of the French; it hadn't quite the wantonness of the Italian; it had the integrity that both lacked. A boy from Bantry Bay would hardly be ignorant of Spanish wine. This had always been one of the most delectable things to come in by the Back Doors of the World.

"They will hang nine Carlists in Pamplona Tuesday," one of the young men was saying (and he was looking at Dana with friendly understanding, as if to warn him of something), "and I do wish they were hanging nine hundred."

"They are hanging nobody in Pamplona, or any other place," Dana said easily. "I would know it if they were."

"How would you know it, boy?" the bishop asked. "Non-Count of County Kerry, who are you?"

"Dana is my guest," Elena interposed, "and nobody will ask him further who he is."

"Nevertheless, there is Carlist mischief coming very near to us," said the doubtful Conde, the Conde who was not Prado. "There was a guard killed this very noontime. His killer will hang, this I pledge, if we must take the entire Carlist Hills apart to find him. There are those who aid the Carlists. There are those who shelter them. I tell you that we will uncover all these seditioners and that we will hang them also. If there is an enemy of the Queen's Government near at hand, let him flush in the knowledge that his death lines are already drawn."

Dana Coscuin flushed, but not at the words of the doubtful Conde. He had not even been listening to them. But there was something of Elena Prado that came across to him, that flustered and shook him completely. She was more than just a little brown-skinned girl. There was an elegant coolness in her voice, though she spoke less than did her guests. There was an inexpressible kindness about her. Dana knew from all the warnings that he was capable of receiving that it was a false kindness. Well, so it was; so was every kindness that is of this world. There was frosty passion in the girl, and duplicity of great depth. There were the eyes than danced with something between glare-ice and gray fire. The light eyes, and the heavy black-blue hair! And there was great amusement in her.

Oh, the Elena would be death-danger to Dana, but how had Magdalena Brume known that she would be? How had the forever-loved Magdalena known of Elena Prado at all?

"The most dangerous of the Carlists is the woman Muerte de Boscaje," the Queen's Abadesa said, the new nun who showed too much bare neck and shoulder and bosom. She said it with a certain cruel querulousness that Dana could not place. "She is the killer and the doxie of killers. She stirs the sleepy Carlists up like wild animals, and she brings younger ones into that mean fold."

"Let the name of that vile woman never be mentioned in this house!" Elena cried with such violence that everybody recoiled. Except Dana.

He had been shaken by Elena's mere presence a moment before, but there was nothing in her simulated anger to shake him. He came to know her rather well in a rapid moment there. There were three of her, really; and no one of her ever appeared unmixed. He read the real name of the apparent molten fury in her gray eyes: and the name of it, again, was amusement.

"I apologize," said the Abadesa. "I almost forgot, for the moment, in whose house and presence I was. No, it is not a name that a shy and sheltered girl should hear and I greatly regret that I spoke it."

"Ah, by the elegant eels of the outer isle, you are all daft," Dana cried in his own amusement and apparent crudity. "I myself would like to hear much more of this devilish woman of whom I know no more than the hint of the name. Muerte de Boscaje, is she? What an air of musty mystery there is about it! I would like to hear much more about this woman, and I would like to hear it from you, Elena."

"Dana Coscuin, I have warned you," the Conde Prado bawled out in real anger. "I will not have my niece subjected to such crudities."

"Be quiet, my uncle," Elena spoke in the elegant coolness of her voice. "Dana enjoys peculiar sanctuary in my house and in my heart, and he enjoys it forever. He can say what he wishes to say. Whatever things he says, it will not be as if another person said them. You will all understand that Dana is very special to me and that he will always be so. And now we will leave the board and go to the salon."

It had been a large and excellent dinner. Even in Queen's Spain of the new ways, there were still old elegances left. There has to be the full old growing even for the parasite to feed upon. And these were not ordinary people here. They were extraordinary people, for all that they had gone twisted and compromised. There had been levels and levels of talk that Dana did not understand at all, that he would have to sort out later.

All left the dinner and went to the drawing room where they

were followed by the wine, coffee, and cigars—long thick cigars for the men, long thin cigars for the ladies. Even these innovating adherents of the Queen had not yet adopted the cigarette from Turkey and Egypt and France.

"There are corners of my castle that I must show you, Dana," Elena said. "Come, Dana. The rest remain. I will return to my duties as hostess within a quarter of an hour."

Dana went with her through a variety of rooms and corridors. Elena carried a fine candle lamp over her head. It was heavy and ornate, with an agate base.

"This is the master chamber," she said at one great room. "Do you know that very extensive changes must be made in your own person, Dana? But if he found you worth recruiting, then we find you so too. We have done very well with some of his selections. The only change we will insist on is a total one, Dana. This, of course, will not affect your wonderful person and personality. It is in this master chamber that you will be ensconced when you come back to my castle as Master."

All three persons were in Elena at once as she shimmered and shifted by candlelight.

"This is my heart outside my body," she said at another large and richly cluttered room. "It is my body, the extension of my body, my own place. And you may enter any time you wish, any way you wish."

"Horses, horses' hoofs," Dana said, "and you have no late guests coming?"

"Only a party of uninvited late guests, Dana, but I believe that both of us have been expecting them. But is it possible that your hearing is better than mine, Dana, and I am listening for them all the time? They must be at a great distance then, since I do not hear them. There are two ways that I can do this, Dana: one of them is very dramatic and I hate to forego it. That one is for me to wait for the Queen's Constables to enter, for me then to confront them with my brace of long goose-necked pistols, to perform a very showy shot to prove that I am in earnest (I am a wonderfully showy pistol shot), and to let you escape while I hold both guests and constables at gun point. Did you really not expect to be tracked here for the guard's murder, Dana, and you riding his own white horse here boldly?"

"Of course I expected it. I believe your uncle the Conde feels badly that he has played Judas in informing on me, but how else could it have been done? And I know that the code of the Constables is that only three men should come for one man. However showy a shot you are, Elena, I am sure that I am the

more effective. I would have, I will have dead by me these three constables, one false bishop, one false nun, one false count—the latter three of late decision. And it may be that I will have one dead girl who is three girls in one.”

“No, Dana, you will not have me dead tonight. Your curiosity about me is too steep to have me killed so early. The attraction I begin to spin over you is too strong for you to have me killed ever. You have waited too long for that part. I have you now and I will change you as I want to. But my own curiosity, and the attraction that you spin over me are too strong to let them put an end to you. With the two of us, Dana, the play has hardly begun. But I will not have any promiscuous killing in my castle. For one thing, Dana, you use up so much of the golden future that way. Think of the empty days and weeks when we have no killing at all to occupy us. No, Dana, you will leave here quite soon, unkilld and unkilld.”

“I cannot trust you, Helena,” Dana said, and he put his hands about her throat.

“Tonight you can trust me completely, my passion. There will be another night in another year when you should not trust me. By then, though you will be half gobbled up, and you will trust me. But tonight I am worth your clear trust. I hear the horses now too, Dana. That makes them a half mile off. Come then, since I will not let myself use my long pistols, and I will not let you use your short American one, we go down this dark corridor then.”

“Your lamp lights it well for some distance,” Dana said. Elena snuffed out the candle-lamp suddenly and sprang aside, but Dana had her by a hand buried in her heavy hair. She giggled with real merriment then, but she'd have been gone away if he had missed her. Dana could not really trust her completely.

Elena went down the absolutely dark corridor, Dana gripping her heavy braids as he went along.

“Who is Muerte de Boscaje?” he asked her. His voice was low-pitched. All voices are lower-pitched in the dark.

“She's a snow-bird,” Elena said. “She does not strike till the first snow in the meadows, six weeks, Dana, seven. Then you will know her and raid with her.”

“And find out that I have already known her?”

“And find out that you have seen her but have not known her at all. Oh Dana, know me, know me a little!”

“Why are you death-threat to me, Elena?”

“For the perversity of the world and for my own perversity, I suppose, Dana. But I am not death-threat to you for many months. I will never be a threat to you, not if I am able to mold

you as you should be molded."

"I have my own mold, and I suspect that it will not be changed."

"Then I *will* be death-threat to you, Dana, but in another year, not now. This is the end of the corridor. Is it not mortal dark here? Embrace me here in the dark in the roughest and most powerful way possible. I exact that from you for saving you this way."

"I'd have done better to save myself in my own way. Ah, and I still might do so."

"No, wait, Dana. It's more fun when you wait till it's almost too late."

"The horsemen are in the yard," Dana said some moments later. "Is it too late? One of them goes to the back door and dismounts and waits. The other two go to the front door. One hangs back a bit there in the dark, and the other knocks for entry. Is this a trap? Are you a trap, Elena? I will shoot my way out of this trap and add you to the false bishop and nun and count and the three true constables. I'll break your neck, girl."

"I am not a trap for you, not tonight, Dana. There are but two doors to my castle, but the castle nestles under the flank of the cliff. Just above us in the roof is a hatch-way. Climb onto my shoulders and unclamp the gramp-irons, Dana. Ah, are you not agile, and am I not strong! The hinges will not groan. They are always oiled; I use them often."

"Roll quietly onto the roof then. From behind its little parapet you can spy down on the men at either door. And from the back parapet, just above us, with one leap you can be into the tangle of vines that cloaks the face of the cliff. I know that you can make your way silently and swiftly up that face of the cliff in the dark, I do it often myself. This is a favorite way I have of coming and going at night. And you are much more agile than I am."

Elena was quite strong for so slight a girl. And very much alive in her emanations. Dana would almost swear that her shoulders scorched his feet through his sandals.

"Dana, you will cross the mule-road at the very place where we first loved," Elena's whisper came up from the absolute darkness. "And then you can lose yourself in the high hills and be clear of all guards and all Queen's Constables for the while."

"Be in expectation of an early snow, and a snow-bird. You will see my other face then. And, Oh Dana, you will finally know the high hilarity of blood and death."

Dana said good-bye to her with the sharp thrust of his toes on her shoulders.

Dana was through the hatch-way and onto the roof. No need to

spy on the guard at the back door or at the front. He couldn't trust Elena completely even now, but he could trust his own swiftness. He was over the gap and onto the vine-clad face of the cliff with no time gone at all. He was quickly up the cliff, across the mule-road (but not at the place of first meeting, at a crooked corner away from it rather—tactics must be varied), and free into the high hills.

Not till then did Dana realize how neatly the little brown girl had sprung his careful-careless trap and robbed him of his three constable prey.

V

MUERTE DE BOSCAJE

"From the narrowest footholds in the high hills, we rolled the Moslems back," the Black Pope was saying, "and it took us seven hundred years. We rolled them back out of Spain but we did not roll them back out of the world. So it will be with this nameless thing that is so much more evil than the Moslems. It is of the Devil and it will be in the world till the end of time. But it is not meant to hold the whole world or even the greater part of the world."

A snowflake touched the Black Pope's nose.

"Ah, the snow," he said, "and the witch will fly soon. Do not follow her. She is in love in an unchristian way."

But some of the young and the older men who listened to the Black Pope would follow the death-witch in spite of his warnings.

"The world is a garden," the old man said. "It is a farm, a plantation, a sheep-ranch. In the garden are the cities also; they too are a great part of the planting. Believe me, all these plantations are sowed with good seed. But the Enemy from the Beginning also sows the red blight: these are the charlocks, the tares, called *zizania* in the Vulgate. Do not be fooled as to what it is and who sowed it. Do not be fooled in the factory or the arsenal, in the ship-yard or the shop; do not be fooled on the bleak farms or in the crowded city, in the club or in the workers' hall or in the drawing room. The wrong thing that is sowed is the red weed, the red blight. And the Enemy has done this.

"Or let us say that we have a green thing growing forever. Everything that is done is done by it. And on it we also have the red parasite crunching forever; and everything that is undone is undone by that. The parasite will present itself as a modern thing. It will call itself the Great Change. Less often, and warily, it will call itself the Great Renewal. But it can never be another thing than the Red Failure returned. It is a disease, it is a scarlet fever, a typhoid, a diphtheria; it is the Africa disease, it is the red leprosy, it is the crab-cancer. It is the death of the individual and of the

corporate soul. And incidentally, but very often, it is also the death of the individual and of the corporate body. We are asked to swear fealty to this parasitic disease which the enemy sowed from the beginning. I will not do it, and I hope that you will not."

There had been a woman screaming several hundred feet below them and at no very great distance. Now there was the hint of several other women joining the screaming.

"Ah, why did she have to kill him?" Tancredi muttered. "He was the least bad of them all. He was with us more than he was against us. And she, if she is really with us, why does every stroke of hers go so wrong for us?"

"Do not be deceived by the way men of bad faith misuse words and names," the Black Pope was saying, and now his head was quite powdered with snow. "It used to be only the English who excelled in the deception of words. Then the French went even beyond them, and now the whole world is adept at it.

"Things are set up as contraries that are not even in the same category. Listen to me: the opposite of radical is superficial; the opposite of liberal is stingy; the opposite of conservative is destructive. Thus I will describe myself as a radical conservative liberal; but certain of the tainted red fish will swear that there can be no such fish as that. Beware of those who use words to mean their opposites. At the same time have pity on them, for usually this trick is their only stock in trade. But do not pity them overly; it is your own death and your soul's death that they work by their deception."

A young boy had come up to the fringe of them in the high rock amphitheater. Dana and Tancredi and several of the others edged over towards the boy.

"Our loyalty on earth is to a Kingdom that is not on earth," the old lecturer was saying. "The Empire is in abeyance, we live all our lives in exile. But let us at least be faithful in our exile. Man on earth must attempt two tasks: to reconstruct himself as nearly as he can to the image of God, and to reconstruct the world as nearly as he can to the image of the Kingdom."

"It is the Pedro Cuadro who has been killed, is it now?" Tancredi asked the boy.

"Yes," said the boy.

And a rider has already ridden to inform, is it not so?" Tancredi asked. "He has ridden to the Constabulary. And our group will be blamed for the killing because Peter was a Queen's man."

"Yes," the boy said.

"It was actually the Bruja, the death-witch who murdered the

not-very-bad Pedro Cuadro, was it not?" Tancredi went on.

"Yes," the boy said.

"But the constables have a traitor of ours who can inform where we den, or rather the witch will say that it is the case that the constables have a traitor of ours."

"Yes," the boy said.

"She herself will lead them part way to us," Tancredi rasped angrily. "Then she will come and lead certain foolish ones of us part way to them."

"Yes, I think that," the boy said.

"And she will bring us, outnumbered, into the rigged middle of them in an unadvantaged place."

"I don't know what that is," the boy said.

"As always, she will perform heroics and prodigies," Tancredi almost hissed, "and she will shrill out the glory of the high Carlist thing. When the mad charge is finished, she will have more than twenty bullet holes in her cloak and it will be a miracle that she is alive. But, when the bodies are tallied, it will be ourselves who contribute so disproportionately to the dead."

"Yes, I think so," the boy said.

"I feel that I already know this witch," Dana said.

"Yes, you do," the boy told him. The boy went down and away from them then, having told Tancredi and Dana and a few others all that he knew of the affairs. And some of the young Carlists began to see about their arms and to drift off to another meeting place out of hearing of the Black Pope. Some others of them said that they would not follow that female fire again; but of these, most knew that they would follow her when they heard her.

It was a light morning snow, more a sign that one could swear by than a weather event. Ah well, ten miles that the rider would go with the news, ten miles that the constabulary would ride back. Or had the constabulary already started? Had they started an hour before the murder itself happened? Tancredi was of that opinion.

There was a frugal noon meal with the Black Pope. And then more and more of the young men drifted off to the other meeting place. How did they know that someone was coming to that place to harangue them? Never mind, they knew.

"The Rezadora, the Mantis is coming now," one of them said. And after a while she came.

Dana Coscuin had the smell of a great black horse before he saw or heard it. He had smelled but not seen it at the stables of the castillo of the Condesa Elena Prado. He had known then that it was a black horse, a stallion and not a gelding, and that it was

priceless—all this without seeing it.

Ah, there were some thirty of the young irregulars there waiting! They heard the muffled sound of approaching hoofs. Then the sound was lost but the Presence came nearer. Dana, who thought he had guessed all that was involved here, was shaken.

"Behind you!" she called in a clear voice. She was behind the thirty of them, in a dead-end pocket in the rocks, and it was no way apparent how she had got there.

"Muerte de Boscaje!" mountainous Tancredi breathed. He was completely dazed, in total admiration; yet he, more than any of them, had been inoculated against her.

This was the infamous Muerte de Boscaje, the insane battle-witch who had led a dozen mad Carlist raids. And something had failed badly in every one of those raids.

Dana Coscuin was as dazed as the rest of them. And he was weirdly puzzled.

Muerte de Boscaje was not exactly, as Dana had suspected that she would be, the same person as the young Countess Elena Prado. Oh, they used the same body, apparently. Perhaps they took turns with it. But they were not essentially the same person.

She talked then, she sang, she shrilled like the mountain wind. She set up the hypnotic rhythm, the corporate blood-beat. Her words would not stand analyzing. They were, in fact, only a parody of the much-used sermons of the Black Pope. The words, and the sense of the words, were only a very minor part of her orchestration. Was she subtle enough, in her present transported person, to do a conscious parody of the Carlist thing? Or did she merely steal the strong cadence of it? It had always had, when used the Black Pope or by any of them, a very noble cadence. Now the girl created a dementia, and they all joined in it.

Even Tancredi who had received special warnings against her joined in as if he were not himself. Even Dana who already knew this girl in several of her persons and who had received absolutely reliable monition against her was avid to follow her now.

Well, of course it was always an excitement and a pleasure to have blood-tangle with the government men; it was not complete pleasure, however, to throw away all advantage before tangling with them.

And in many young men, and in many older men too, there is a real appreciation of the High Hilarity of Blood and Death. This is a valid thing. But is it valid when it has fallen into the hands of traitors?

Muerte de Boscaje, who in other circumstances was the

Countess Elena Prado, wore a rich black cloak with a crimson lining. The men were all assembling their horses. Horses? But that was wrong. No more than a very few of them should be horsed. In these tall cliffs horses were often a restriction on mobility. The mounted government men weren't fought from horseback.

Most of the men assembled now had the old smooth-bore guns of the style used in the Napoleonic wars. A few had American or Belgian rifles. No, no, this also was wrong. This was the Government kind of skirmishing they were getting ready for; it was not that of the Carlist irregulars. Hand knives, and pistols as a last resort, and ghostly stealth: such were the tactics of the irregulars. Do not fight the Government men in their strong points.

But someone had brought Dana his own horse, girthed and ready and making clatters with his hoofs. And Dana swung into the saddle, knowing it was foolish. One travels long distances by horse. But one fights from crawl or crouch, and never higher than afoot.

At the climax of one of her hysterias, Muerte de Boscaje slashed her own palm deeply with a shining knife and rubbed her face with the blood and gore of the cut.

"Sangre, sangre, sangre," she set up the chant then. "Blood blood, blood."

She rode forward with a sort of eagle screaming and a mastiff jollity. Sky-high hilarity in her impassioned whooping! Blood glee! And the men followed her on horseback, out of their wits, under her black and crimson spell. Their mounts slipped on the stones and the new snow, and the men set up a shouting. But noise was absolute madness in a skirmish such as this.

Muerte de Boscaje fired the carbine that she carried; then all the irregular young Carlists began to fire their muskets and carbines and long-handled pistols and Collier revolvers and long rifles. About thirty Carlists were being led out with no attempt at concealment. They were led down a long open slope (why did they not hold the slope, and make the Government men come up it?), across a bottom draw where gun-fire from the concealed Government men began to pick them off, and up another steeper and more torturous incline—thirty men into a hidden arc of two hundred men. They were lumbering and stumbling now with their horses slipping on the bad snowy footing.

"Sangre, sangre, sangre," still came the happy broken chanting, the High Hilarity of Blood and Death and Sex, the compounded passion. And then a really murderous fire from the entrapping circle angled down on them. At least half of the young irregulars

were down now: brain-shot, horse-rolled, dragged and dead.

There was a high far whine, higher and farther than this immediate field of slaughter. Scales began to drop from some of the eyes. Tancredi howled something when there came the whine of a long rifle much higher and much more distant than the others.

"Dead-down, Mariella, you overshoot her! This time you hit!" Perhaps the queer carrying voice of Tancredi reached all the way to the high cliff that the anomalous shots were coming from. "Through the notch now, there is no other way," Tancredi called to those on the immediate field.

Dana regained his own clarity, and fell into deeper danger, when a musket ball whanged into his own horse. There didn't seem a chance that any of the irregulars would come through it alive. But the only possible way was through that notch, the gap in the hills in front of them that should have been the keystone of the Government arch. Dana's horse staggered badly.

Muerte de Boscaje had been hit by a far whining rifle shot and she emitted a scream of absolute outrage. There was more than howling pain in her scream, there was more than surprise and fear: there was furious anger towards someone who had bungled horribly. Nobody was supposed to be firing down from that cliff. And *nobody* was supposed to be shooting at Muerte de Boscaje.

But her horse was still sound. Dana leapt from his own stumbling mount onto the black stallion behind the bleeding death-witch.

Then, in the attempt to gain the notch, the way through, all the Carlists who were still mounted rode into what should have been the very eye of the fire. But there wasn't any eye of the fire.

There was a gap in the Government line. A way had been left open through the notch. Only five horses, carrying eight riders in all, got through free: Muerte de Boscaje and seven of the Carlists. And twenty-three Carlists were left dead in the ambush.

The survivors galloped their tired horses, three of them double-loaded, hard and heavy for a mile. They gained a rock-corral known only to themselves.

"There's no need for caution," Tancredi said then. "We weren't followed; we weren't meant to be. They regard us as of the witch's own party. Well, who of us really was of the witch's own party? One I know now for sure."

Tancredi rode his horse up to the only other single-mounted man—quite a young boy, really. He set the mouth of his long pistol between the boy's eyes, and the eyes rolled up in terror. He fired, and the eyes seemed to come unhinged and to roll down in

opposite directions before they closed. And the boy fell dead on the horse's neck.

Muerte de Boscaje had closed her eyes in transport during the headlong gallop. Dana was dismounted now and looking up at her, studying her. She opened her eyes again with a shudder. Muerte, the death-witch, was gone now, or rather she had withdrawn down inside. The opened eyes were those of Elena Prado, wounded, scared, tired, and disconsolate.

"Who else?" Tancredi was asking, and he was waving his long-handled pistol as he studied the remainder of the white-faced Carlists. All of them had always been afraid of Tancredi. "We were allowed to escape. Why? The witch had tagged those she wished to escape. Who else is really of her party?"

"There are no others, Tancredi," Elena said softly (she did at least comprehend the doings of each of her states when in another state), "the boy you killed was the only one that I had clear understanding with."

"You then," Tancredi said, and he turned his long pistol on her.

"All right," she said. "Kill me then. I had rather Dana killed me. But I also have secret passion for you, Tancredi, so it is all right that you kill me."

"No, Tancredi," Dana interposed. "You kill her, then I kill you."

"All right, Dana," Tancredi said in dazed fashion. "I kill her. You kill me. All right, Dana." Again he brought his pistol about to kill Elena.

Dana savaged Tancredi off his horse, caused him to miss his fire, rolled him in the grass and rocks, pinned him flat. Dana might not have been able to do this to Tancredi had not the big man now fallen into a state of smiling listlessness.

"You have been seduced by her before, Tancredi," Dana accused. "You have no excuse."

"True, I have no excuse if I leave her alive. But I just remember that she is dying in any case. Cut the rifle shot out of the witch, Dana, and see whose name is on it. It's of an unseduced woman, and it will kill the witch."

"How will there be name on a rifle shot, Tancredi?"

"There will be, Dana. Cut it out and see. It is the name of one who remains forever unseduced by her or hers."

The four other young Carlists shuffled off, two to a horse, dazed, defeated, deflated of their recent dream of love and death, or of their recent nightmare of sex and murder.

"You should not come back to the hills in less than a year, Dana," Tancredi said, "not if you go away with Muerte now. They will all believe that you are Muerte's creature and they will kill you for it.

I will believe it also. As soon as she is dead, Dana, ride out of the country."

"Before a year has passed, she will have seduced all of you into such massacres again and again," Dana said, "unless I am able to mold her again, to form her again now."

"It is the pitch that defiles," Tancredi swore. "There is no reforming of an other-sexed devil. It's no matter, though. She'll be dead before the day is gone. Then ride, Dana."

Dana tumbled the young dead boy off his horse, mounted it, and rode off leading the black stallion with Elena sullenly upon it.

Tancredi picked a precarious way along the slopes, half-way back the way he had come, launched a hill skirmish as it should be launched, killed three Government men, and sent fifty of them into aimless panic. He partly made amends for being seduced that day.

Dana Coscuin brought Elena Prado to her castillo, and stayed with her there for a week.

Elena did not die. She did not even sicken. Dana, when he had cut the rifle ball from the back of her neck, from the back of her shoulder, found that it did have a name cut on it. It was the name Mariella, she who would surely remain forever unseduced by Elena Prado or by Muerte de Boscaje. This was the Mariella who was the girl friend or mountain wife of Tancredi and who had winged the death-witch from the high cliff. But even the name Mariella, etched by hand on the rifle shots, did not have enough magic to kill Elena. And Mariella had thought that it would have.

Elena did not die, and she did not sicken. She certainly did not play the wounded role, except perhaps in reverse. She had enormous vitality. She even tempted Dana to rough her, to rough her wound, to revel in her blood. And she tempted him to much more scarlet things.

Elena was all her persons at once now. Her real merriment came to the fore strongly; it was her own nature, but it was a twisted and sinful sort of gaiety—almost bottomless, for all that, and more exciting than a human thing has the right to be.

The shy and sheltered girl was in her too; she used that, she used it strongly. Sometime there would come an hour, only a little while after her death, when the Devil himself would say in a straited and bemused voice, "She is a shy and sheltered girl. Remember one thing, all, remember it in your blood: I am one of those who shelter her." It may be that this scene would happen, it may be that Dana only staged it in his own mind. And yet Elena was on quite close terms with the Devil and kept him dangling

unmercifully.

And Muerte de Boscaje was always simultaneous and strong in Elena: the high hilarity of blood and death and sex and flesh! She soused the brains and lights of Dana with her all-compassing fleshy philosophy. Really, it wasn't decadent, nor was it scattered and unjointed. It was totally integrated, filled-in and complete; it was fully logical and rational, if its premise was accepted. The fleshy statement of Elena Prado was one of the two possible statements that can be made about the worlds.

"There are only two possible statements that can be made about the worlds," the Black Pope of the Carlist Hills had lectured one day. "Alpha: there is a God. Omega: there is not a God. To adhere to either of these two statements strongly is to be logical at least. Not to do so is to be in the snivelling wasteland between and to have no point of contact with logic or reason. Upon either of these two statements a total system can be built, and it can be true to itself in each of its million details. But the two systems cannot have points of contact in even the least detail."

The old lecturer had also once said, of the death-witch herself, "She is in love in an unchristian way." *O hermano mio*, was she ever! She was in love with everything in one of the two possible ways. And again, in the wasteland between them, there is no possibility of love at all, only of stickiness. Better even her inverted love, the torrid satanism of the Omega way, than the empty thing.

Pardon. We are misunderstood. No, there is *not* a middle rationality without passion. There is no rationality at all without passion, and no logic. What would one hang them upon? Sometimes one must insist, for a very short moment at least, on certain truths.

And Dana was misunderstood. Elena Prado was misunderstood. She made a good thing out of the misunderstandings, though. Dana Coscuin tried to have it both ways. He couldn't. He should have stood firm in the first statement; that has enough flesh in it, but not flesh alone. Elena was not of ordinary flesh. She was of flesh gone absolutely fetishistic, and with no place for any other central thing.

Dana put his hand into the fire. Then he walked into it bodily. Two days, three. Dana fell philosophically. That is bad. He fell carnally. That is also bad. (All in the context of the first statement.) A million details began to grow out of his changes or falls, and not one of them would be in consonance with the previous details of his person.

The minutiae of the affair are not to be given here. They are

locked up in documents in an intangible place. But the basic fact of it all was known widely and instantly. Dana had several scattered persons who were in accord with him. It was these who knew the change at once.

It was known to Aileen Dinneen in the hills above Castletown in Ireland.

"Dana Coscuin, you of the same blood that flows in the left side of my body," she called out, "why have you done this wrong thing with another woman? Better you should have stayed in Ireland and sinned with me."

It was known to a priest named Croinin, also in the hills above Bantry Bay.

"Dana Coscuin, I told you to think twice before you died dishonorably in Spain," he sputtered angrily, "and you have gone ahead and done it thoughtlessly."

It was known, in some nonverbal fashion perhaps, to a demented girl in Hendaye who was called Sainte Erma. Sainte Erma suffered grotesquely and silently because of Dana.

It was known to Jane Blaye, the mother of Sainte Erma. Jane Blaye went into a large and cluttered room, her own quarters.

"You must kill the snake, not play at killing it," she said to the carved wooden statue of the gleeful virgin that was there.

"Ah, I knew it would be a long weird way coming," she said to the peasant painting of Christ Coming Through The Walls. "We will still look for it. We will come through walls ourselves. There aren't any doors to where we have to go."

And to the third noteworthy thing, the remnant head of her husband in the angry shrine corner she said:

"Dana has left our company for a while. How shall we ever unlock the things if our most promising ones are lost to us. I'm flushed from it. Cool me."

She sat there, and the cool sanity of her husband, Christian Blaye, swept over her.

The thing was known to Magdalena Brume in certain low hills that broke into moors.

"Dana Coscuin!" she cried in blue-eyed sorrow and outrage. "How can you be my dear friend if you misbehave with a female beast? Surely you still want to be friendly with me. How then have you traded in your soul for the tired little lies? Once you left your blood on me for a calling card, and now you have nothing but wormsblood in you. The Saints in Heaven weep when you defile yourself so cheaply, Dana. I always did say that if the Saints in Heaven wept less and got off their fat *groppe* and went to work on these things, something might be done. I myself will see if

something cannot be done about this."

(What? All this ringing of bells all around the world just because Dana Coscuin went to bed a few times with a little brown-skinned girl? For that, yes. And also because he traded off his soul philosophically, and adhered, by silent assent to the last statement rather than the first. There is often a syndrome of items here. And these things do make a difference to the people of the first statement.)

Magdalena found her husband, big rough Brume, sleeping in the brush. Indeed, he was storing up sleep, for he was starting on a long travel that very night.

"I have just suffered a wide-eyed noontime dream about Dana Coscuin, the boy we blessed on his way to Spain," she told her husband as she wakened him with a loving swat on the loins.

"Women have no business with these monitory dreams," rough Brume growled. "Who are you, Caesar's wife or Pilate's, that you should suffer a dream?"

"I am the wife of a nobler Roman than either. Go at once. Get Dana, wherever he is. It will take you no more than a week out of your way. Shake him out of his lethargy and his sin and his brainlessness, with words if you can, by the nape of the neck if nothing else will do for him. Take him with you on your journey. Yes, I know that you will be gone for more than one year and less than two. I know that you must move from here on the moment and arrive somewhere else on the moment. But Dana is my dear friend, and this concerns his soul. Only you are powerful enough to compel him away from the brown-skinned enchantress. Let the ninety-nine wait. Go save the one who is in peril. He will be luck to you, Malandrino. And the breaking of the schedule for your own journey may save your own life. These things have happened. Go get Dana. He is our friend upon the earth, and we are responsible to God for him."

"All right," rough Brume said. He gathered himself up wearily and started on the side journey that would take him one week's travel out of his way.

Four days, five, six that Dana had spent with Elena Prado. And he was a reversed man in that short time. There is indeed a syndrome of items in these things. A man does not reverse in one aspect and not in another. If he did ever turn back from this new way, it would be at some distance down the road, and he would never be the same man he had been before.

Seven days that he had spent with her, and then there was another formal dinner at Elena's castillo. It was a joyous and

celebrating one for all those clever folks of the second statement. "For we have lost our lamb that was found." It was a sort of triumph that Elena would have with them all there.

The Queen's New Bishop was there again; he rubbed his hands and was much more urbane than he had been before, utterly smooth now and unhesitant. The Queen's New Conde was there and he was fulfilled. And the Queen's New Abadesa, showing an expanse of bare arms and bosom. The young philosophers were there with their girls. All were of one mind and pleasure now.

Elena had stolen and remolded a fine recruit. He was one of those who would be flung to the fore in the calculated move that would soon crack all Europe open like a great egg filled with blood. It is good to have these fine young recruits who can be flung to the fore. And there was no doubt, from the talk that went around tonight, that there were very many persons working hard to split Europe wide open.

"There is Mordecai in Paris now," one of the young philosophers was saying.

"He is an untidy man. He is surfeited with sour rhetoric. He is a boor. He is a Jew. But he can think. It is said that he will make a great pronouncement soon. He has been clearing his throat for it for these several years. And when he has made his pronouncement, then we will have our basis defined. I have that much confidence in him. He will have put the words into our mouths forever. In a hundred and fifty years we will have taken over the whole world with his words."

"No. In five years we will have taken over all Europe. In ten years we will have taken over the world," the Queen's New Count was saying. "This is on the word of young Ifreann Chortovitch who is more in a hurry than is Mordecai. It is not words we need but blood. There cannot be too much blood spilt. We will use whomever we find it convenient to use, and we will not all necessarily move in quite the same direction. It might even be better if we did not. Bloody chaos is what we will engineer in the years immediately ahead. From tottering obsolescence, from new bloody chaos, we will extract a still newer synthesis. There are a few men of distorted but strong intelligence who stand in our way, however. And that brings us to the question of —"

"—of a man named Brume," said the New Bishop. "Dana, you have gestures of his, you have ways of his, you lift your head as he does, you have been with him on your way to Spain."

"I have been with him, yes."

"You can find him."

"He moves around, I believe. But, yes, I can find him."

"Find him and kill him then."

A mile away there was the sound of *zoccoli* (Italian wooden sandals) on stone. Moreover, the sandals were muffled and they were worn by a very quiet-moving man. Once Dana had seen a man wearing such sandals as would make such non-sounds on stone, but he hadn't been paying attention to it. It had to be imagination now. Nobody could hear muffled sandals at a mile's distance.

"Find him and kill him then," the New Bishop repeated.

"But I love him," Dana protested.

"You do not love him. He is an error-bedrenched man. He is a God-bedrenched man. He is the essence of the old things that you loved before your eyes were opened. He is no part of the inspired human complexity that you have entered now. You can kill him."

Ah, the complexity, the syndrome of items! It contained the electric brown-skinned flesh of Elena Prado and the whole hilarity of death and sex. It extended from the almost intricate ideas of the young philosophers to that rather urbane place that used to be called the Gates of Hell. It was all of one evolute piece and over it shimmered a species of intellectual fascination.

"You can find him and kill him," the New Bishop said.

"I suppose that I can find him and kill him," Dana answered like a noddy.

Muffled mountain sandals on nearer rocks now, and Dana remembered whose footfalls they were. "It is providential that he should come just when I am told to find him," Dana said to himself, "but how can it be providential when there is no providence? The old tongue still waggles a while in the new man."

"And there is another wanted man who has his strings on you," the New Abadesa with the bare bosom was saying. "He is a more important man than Brume, though seldom so immediate. We cannot find him, but he has strings on you. Track back on those strings and discover him for us. This man—"

"—is known only as the Count Cyril," the New Bishop said, "and Dana here will deliver him into our hands."

"I'm unable to," Dana protested. "I have never seen him. I don't know who or where he is."

"But, as the Abadesa says, he has strings on you. You are very intelligent, Dana. I believe that you can find him."

"I am very intelligent," Dana said stupidly. "I believe that I can find them."

Dana rose up from table and went out the front door. He never came back. Outside, he saw rough Brume standing about fifty

yards distant. Brume signalled Dana to follow, and then turned away. Dana followed him.

"I intend to kill you, Brume," Dana said when they had walked together about an hour. It was a clouded night and quite dark.

"No, you are not now capable of doing that or any other thing, Dana," rough Brume said. "I intend to get your brains back for you, or to get new brains and fit them into your head. I am completely disgusted with you, but my wife says that you are our friend upon the earth and that we are responsible to God for you. In this, I defer to my wife and to God."

It was a bat-wing clouded night, a jagged lightning night, a Gothic night. No country had ever been so Gothic as had High Spain.

"Where are we going?" Dana asked.

"Far. Many places."

"For how long?"

"For more than a year. Perhaps a little less than two years."

Of the little less than two years, there will be given no more here than a scant abridgement. Though it is now more than a hundred years (and somewhat less than two hundred) since, there are still restrictions on part of the data.

Why the restrictions? Surely all the persons then living are dead now, are they not?

No. We cannot even be sure of that.

Some of the items and facts are hard to come by, but what is available will be given.

VI

SON OF THE DEVIL

In the paintings of Fragonard, there are trees that are unreal. Sometimes they seem to be a curious heaping up of elements of oak and elm and yew trees, but not according to any rational botanical system. Sometimes they seem to be massive studio montages made out of clustered purple grapes and bird feathers. Yet one traveller wrote that there really were groves of these impossible trees in Dauphine and Piedmont in the eighteenth century. One grove of them had, in fact, survived into the nineteenth century; Dana Coscuin and Malandrino Brume had just come through it afoot.

In the novels and plays of Marivaux, there are men who are not real. They seem to be a curious heaping up of elements of Old Roman and Old French, with inconsistent modish attitudes, and the dated smell called Moment of Time. Sometimes these men seem to be studied *mélanges* of shepherds and princes and rogues and pedants. Yet one student of the period has written that there really were such impossible men in the eighteenth century. At least one of these unlikely men had, in truth, survived into the nineteenth century. Dana Coscuin and big rough Brume had just come to visit this unlikely man who lived on the fringe of the too-blended, too-artzy grove.

"Yes, certainly I am Ashley," the man opened the conversation to them in English. "Who else would I be? Who else would be worth coming to see here? How is it odd that an English line should be living in this border region for three hundred years? The English are a special people in the earth and we enjoy uncommon privileges. I believe that the world is kept functioning by about a thousand of us who live at some thousand crossways of the world. We are the sponsors, we are the overseeing spirits. We sustain the world in its weak districts. Without us it would slope and stagger and fall. In our special office we are like angels among men."

"You are not an Englishman," rough Brume said.

"But I am," insisted the man who called himself Ashley. "I am of that special species, although I have never been in England. Is a Moscovy Duck the less of a Moscovy if he has never happened to wing his way over Moscow itself? Strangers, you come against me today with pistols and knives as if to take me for a robber. Yet, I have taught in the world for many years and nobody has taken me."

"You are not Christ either," rough Brume said. "I believe that you have some strange creatures under your roof, man named Ashley. I intend to kill two or three of them."

"With short sword and pistol?"

"Yes, with short sword and pistol."

"Come and see then," said the unenglishman who used the name of Ashley.

He led them down cool hallways (it was summer again now) that were lighted by sky-blue patches where chink-rocks had been left out or removed from the arched roofs.

The man Ashley was certainly not real. He had in him something of the Old Frenchman, yes, and something of the Old Roman (they were most likely on the Italian-Piedmont side of the often obliterated border now), with a more modish attitude that sat nervously upon him. He was a mixture of shepherd and prince and rogue and pedant. There was another element in Ashley that could not be named at the moment: never mind, the name would come. If it was true that such men had lived in the eighteenth century, it was not likely that one had survived into the nineteenth. No, the unwilling host here was a somewhat dated mask rather than a genuine man.

Ashley brought them to a dim room with a rancid and musty stench. But it was not something to be regretted. It had its stark animality and uncommon earthiness. Curiosity lept up in Dana Coscuin like bay trout.

The dim room seemed surrounded by a ring of light. There was a little concourse running clear around the dim room, and the concourse was lighted by patches of sky. There was a stone table with benches there. Brume and Dana Coscuin sat down with the man Ashley.

The dim room that was surrounded by the concourse was really a pit. How much lower its floor was than the stone floor of the concourse could not be ascertained. It might be very deep. There was the smell of rotting food and rotting insects, of shrewd connivance and of slow murder. There was a sheen like fabricated mist, sheets of it, waves of it, mere breaths of it, whole complexities of it. There was the assertion here of that

personality that stands rankest of all, except possibly that of the snakes.

Spiders.

Spiders as big as a pin-head, spiders as big as a soldo-coin, spiders as big as a house-cat. Every sort of insect was attracted by the rotting food that hung in mesh-bags in the middle air of the dim room. And there was every sort of web there, each designed to intercept its own precinct of dim slanted air. Every spider there ruled his own web and extended it.

The name for the unnamed element in the man Ashley: Spiderish. "If you would understand spiders," Ashley said, "you must first understand that they are counterpoints of people. I have named a great number of my spiders—aptly, of course. The parallelism between spiders and people is so strong that there must be a paranatural force at work here. See that very large and fleshy-appearing spider there! I take him to be Mastai Ferretti, the new Pope, Pius the Ninth, Pio Nono. He has been spinning very rapidly, but he has been at it for only seven weeks. I have always loved these papal tapestries that my Pope-Spiders spin. They all have the basic design that is ordained for them. But each one superimposes his own signature-motif on this. See the glint of gold in his spin! Is it not magnificent?"

"I am puzzled by this rather large spider with the very small web," rough Brume was saying, "and yet is has long anchor lines set out as if he were quite ambitious. And the glint in his eye is familiar."

"It is amazingly familiar to anybody who is acquainted with high men," the man Ashley whispered in soft admiration. "Not even the pencil of a master caricaturist could catch the resemblance so closely. He is Lord John Russell, or so at least I have named him. He has been spinning for even a shorter time than has Pio Nono. And, no, I don't believe that he is particularly ambitious. The English ministers also inherit a basic weave. I tell you though, strangers, that very many of the weavings here in my spider room are prophetic. Their correspondences in the outer world in some cases have not happened yet. There is Mazzini, there, the especially spiderish spider. His Roman Republic is explicit in his web, but in the exterior world it is merely implicit as yet.

"There is Cavour. He has hardly begun in the world, but look how well-developed his web is. There is Lord Acton in England. There is Montalambert. There is poor Lamennais who will officially go to Hell. There is Mordecai or Marx who has been spinning a web in Paris and other places. Notice the exceptionally

long anchor lines of his web, though the body of his web will always be paltry.

"There is the innovating web of Frederic Ozanam who is possibly a saint. There is that of Archbishop Vincent Pecci which gives the illusion of having caught the whole world like a fly in it. There is the rather antique, and yet archetypical web of one spider to whom I have given the name of Count Cyril Prasinos."

There was the hint of a scuffle in the concourse behind them. It was not a noise exactly. It was a guessed sound muffled in spider silk. Either Brume or Ashley could have turned his head and seen what was going on, but neither did. Then it was as if one thing, and later a second thing, was eased down onto the floor stones. The man named Ashley exhibited sudden nervousness, but he still did not look around. The man named Brume showed no nervousness at all, but neither did he glance behind him. And the man named Dana Coscuin, whether nervous or not, was no longer there. He had disappeared from his seat at the stone table in the concourse.

"Some small spiders have large webs, and some of the greatest spiders have only scanty systems, old spider man," rough Brume said. "I am interested in how you have set this up."

"It is only a *cavallino*, a hobby-horse of mine, this cultivation of the spiders," Ashley mumbled. "It isn't a vital thing. The hobby is a gelding and not a stallion, and I ride it for my amusement only. The correspondences between certain individual spiders and certain individual leading men in the world are in my mind only. I extract these images as another man might extract fancies and images from the depths of a log fire at night. Fancies, sir, fancies only, of no interest to any one except myself."

"But they are of great interest to me," Brume said. "Who is this arty and elegant spider here?"

"That is Chancellor Metternich of Austria who rehearses his fall from power again and again and again. He is in love with his own drama. He considers it from every possible aspect. He obliterates sections of it that do not satisfy him, and he substitutes other more dramatic scenes in the tapestry of his weaves. What is the present year? I myself become confused when I am among my spiders. On no, the fall of Metternich has not happened yet, but it will be well done when he is done."

"Who are those two odd swollen spiders who seem to share one web?"

"Frederick William of Prussia who does not have the intelligence to become a successful spider, and von Bismark who does."

Rough Brume reached across to Ashley and helped himself to a cigar from that man's breast pocket. He fumbled out one of the Sauria phosphor matches and lit it by scrunching it on the sole of the boot on one of the bodies on the stones behind them. Had there been bodies lying on the stone floor behind them all of this time? Not all of this time, part of this time.

"There are man's bones deep in the spider pit," Brume said. "They are plucked clean of any adhering shreds and are dusted over now."

"I suppose so," Ashley said. "I believe they have been there a long time."

There was a noiseless noise in more distant parts of the building, and the man Ashley was becoming very nervous about it.

"I believe there is real counterpoint between outside happenings and the happenings of your hairy spirits here," Brume said. "A life has just been extinguished in the world, then another; likewise one strand, then another, of one of the webs was snapped at the same time. What is the name of that spider there?"

"I will not tell you his name," Ashley answered with the first show of stubbornness.

"And yet you are one of the strands of his web," Brume pursued. "If you should happen to be extinguished a moment from now, one strand of his web would be snapped at that same moment."

"I suppose so."

"Who are these three spiders here with the King Sign on them, Ashley?"

"In France, Louis Philippe who comes to the end of his web, and Louis Napoleon who comes to the beginning of his. I have the fancy that a future historian may someday confound the two of them. And that is Tzar Nicholas of Russia, a well-meaning spinner of little talent."

"And who are these commoner spiders, these uncommon commoners?"

"The are everybody, sir, everybody. There is Palacky; there is von Moltke; there is Tocqueville who has his great histories already sketched out in his mind, and he will insist that the world conform to them. Nobody will ever say 'I was there' so often as this man will; though it won't always be true that he was there or that the events were so. There is a different spider, Newman in England; he has abandoned a web and has begun another less material one. It will have style, though! There is Ledru-Rollin, a Frenchman of today. I suppose he will be doing something

tomorrow or he wouldn't be here among the great ones; although he hardly seems to have the ability for it."

A voice was heard in a distant room of the building singing *My Name is Dana Coscuin*, a song that Brume had heard before, and Ashley had not. The singer seemed to be dragging things behind him over the stone floors.

"Is it not true that most of the spiders are really struggling against each other, or attempting to influence or preempt each other?" rough Brume asked. "Might they not be called proselytizing spiders?"

"I suppose so," Ashley gulped; he had become quite scared.

"What are the segmented spiders?" Brume asked.

"They are the groups, the societies, the clubs, the institutions, the movements, even the journals: the generative happenings. There is Paulskirche, there is the Society of the Seasons, there is the Petrashevtsy, the Mountain (really, it should be called the Second Mountain), the Carbonari, La Reforme, Rights of Man, the Families, the Congrega d'Inferno at Sinigaglia, Circolo Romano. Many others."

Dana Coscuin then came to Brume and Ashley dragging by the heels two bodies that had been men. Ashley looked completely shattered. One might almost feel sorry for him, such a one as could feel sorry for snakes or spiders or devils. Dana dragged the bodies in beside the other two that already lay there in the concourse.

"What will I do with them, old Ashley, toss them into the spider-pit with the other old bones?" Dana asked heartily.

"Please do not," Ashley begged. "Leave them here with me. Oh Antitheos, Enantitheos! Leave them with me for a while."

"Have I not an apt pupil, Ashley?" Brume asked. "Had you so apt a one?"

"I had thought so, yes," Ashley said in tormented words, and indicated one of the dead men with the nod of his head.

"Are there other men in the house, Dana?" Brume asked.

"I believe that there is one in the walls, but I cannot say quite where."

"No, that is a woman," said Brume. "Is it not a woman, Ashley?"

"A woman, yes. There are no other men alive here now."

"Shall we kill the woman, Ashley? And shall we kill you?"

"No, do not, Brume. You don't understand how it is with us. What life we have is already more fragile than you would imagine."

"There is a lot of evil that comes from your spider-pit and from your guests," Brume said. "This had been one of the devil's own

way-stations. How shall we stop it if we do not kill you also?"

"Do not toy with me, Brume," said the shaken Ashley. "You intend to have my house used for a trap. You intend to use me as the bait for that trap. So you will not kill me today."

"Would it not be neater, though, to toss the cadavers into the pit?"

"No. Leave them, Brume, I will take care of them. There is something intimate to me in these that young Coscuin has slain."

"What? Have the demons real affection for each other? Are they subject to bereavement?"

"Oh Sathana! Yes, we are."

Dana and Malandrino met several such unusual persons on their unusual journey. It was another country then, in another day and month, perhaps in another year. It was a rough and pleasant country. That part of the mountains on which they laid their heads was named Gennargentu. That part of the ocean which they could see distantly was named Orosei. This was the island of Sardinia, ruled (as was also the Piedmont) by the House of Savoy. And there was something stirring that would use the House of Savoy as an instrument.

In the months gone by, Brume and Coscuin had been in Bruges; something was stirring in Bruges. They had been as far as city Prague and as country Brandenburg. They had been in Moravia, and in the Tyrol, and in Congress Poland. They had been in Carinthia and in Lombardy and in Rome itself. Something was stirring in each of these places.

While in Rome, Dana Coscuin had discovered to what species of creature Brume actually belonged. Rough Brume, who had always seemed to be made out of the mountains, was a Roman. It was an enormous thing and hard to believe.

They had been in Paris. They had been in Geneva. They had been to Marseille. And something had been stirring in each of those places also. They had, by unusual condition and kaleidoscopic circumstance, shed blood in every one of the places they had visited, except Bruges.

But what could possibly be stirring in sleepy and mountainous Sardinia? Sleepy and back-mountain, and back-woods and back-bay Sardinia, the isolated and useless and forgotten island, was one of the vital centers of what was stirring in the world. In its mountainous center was the center of the secret society of the Charcoal-Burners. It was a suspect society, and congress with it was forbidden by Christ's Vicar, the Pope. And at the hidden center of the Charcoal-Burners was a further core secret society

that was so guarded against intrusion that not one Charcoal-Burner in a hundred had even heard of it; yet the Charcoal-Burners were directed by this unknown center of theirs.

How had Malandrino Brume and Dana Coscuin penetrated this inner secret society? How had they learned its *parole*, its words and its signs? Oh, they were sharp as serpents and slick as cats; they could learn these things, they could enter these things. Well, how could they, as Catholic men both, enter into that congress? How could they give those signs and words? Perhaps they did things that they shouldn't have done.

"We cannot even say with clear conscience that we are working for clear good," Brume grumbled to Dana Coscuin as they lay on a slope of the mountain named Gennargentu one day. "The most we can say, and that with mixed conscience, is that we are working for mixed good. This is a shadowy land, between good and evil, and we must be two shadowy men to work in it at all. For all that he is a late-sucking parasite, the devil is into all of the present fields before us. There are things growing here that we *cannot* let grow till the harvest time, Dana. Or it may be that this is the harvest time come already."

"I'm going back to Spain immediately," Dana said.

"The very mountains in Spain are musty, Dana. That is not where things are stirring. You have learned the fundamental things of Ireland. You have learned the fundamental things of Spain. The battle will now be in more subtle fields."

"My own next battle will be in Spain again, and I am already afraid that it is far too subtle a field for me."

"What really draws you back to Spain, Dana?"

"Elena Prado."

"Lady Death-in-the-Woods herself? The double-named wench? She's a hell filly."

"Maybe she need not remain a hell filly. Your wife Magdalena told you that I was your friend upon the Earth and that you were responsible to God for me. Never mind how I know that she told you that. No, of course I have not heard from her. How could I have?"

"So then?"

"So Elena Prado is my friend upon the Earth and I am responsible to God for her."

"That is a very dangerous responsibility, Dana. It will be either your body's death or your soul's if you play with that fire again. Don't do it."

"Yes. I will do it."

"Come with me to Turin first. I want to have a few words with

the King Charles Albert while he is still king. There is a proverb that kings sometimes talk truth in their twilight days. I forget just how it goes. You can return to North Spain by the land route then. You have been over most of the roads."

"All right. On that way I may stop by and see how Ashley and his spiders have recovered."

"Oh, Ashley is dead now. He didn't play the part of the trap at all well. We go to Turin."

It was in Turin that a gentleman, perhaps even a nobleman from his aspect, called after Dana Coscuin.

"Wait, sir! Wait, Oh my Count! God and St. John be praised! Where have you been?"

Dana had been pleasantly larking around the town. Their approach to the city had been vivacious, coming to it across hemp fields on foot with unaccountable anticipation. The buildings here were newer and racier than those of Rome. Dana had just been wondering whether the Palazzo Madama before which he stood could be translated as the Madam Palace. It did look like a sporting house.

But the gentleman was calling out to someone, and there was nobody before him except Dana.

"Cyril, Count Cyril," the man was crying, and he rushed towards Dana. "To see you again is to—"

Dana shivered at the unreality of the moment. It was always mysterious when he heard that name. And the gentleman pulled up short and his face darkened.

"You are not Count Cyril," the man said accusingly. "You are not the Count Cyril Prasinós."

"Have I said that I was?" Dana asked puzzled.

"You are not he. You are a much younger man. But how is it that you look so much like him and you a ragged ruffian?"

"Where is the Count Cyril?" Dana asked in a hurry as though the opportunity would slide away from him. "I am an associate of his and I have been looking forward to meeting him."

"No, no," the man disclaimed. "If you were really an associate of his you would not ask where he was to be found. You would know that he would find you when he wanted you. But how can you look so like him and yet lack all of his qualities? Where is the nobility? Where is the wisdom?"

"Pig's arse, how do I know where the wisdom is?" Dana growled ungently to the gentleman. Truly, Dana was as disappointed as the gentleman was. Why couldn't Count Cyril Prasinós have been there in the square?

It was also in Turin that Dana heard a King talk truth in his

twilight days. King Charles Albert, Duke of Savoy, nominal ruler of the Piedmont, King of Sardinia, healthy appearing and not quite fifty years old, did not seem to be in the twilight of his life. The fact that he talked straight King's truth, however, indicated to one wise man, Brume, that he would die in a year or two.

"There was never a man so regarded as a Liberal and a Nationalist as I have been," the King was saying to Malandrino Brume and to three other men; and Dana Coscuin, mingling with footmen and menials, listened closely. He was a poor boy from the outer bay country, and he had never heard a king unburden himself before.

"For a fact, in my personal views, I am a Liberal and a Nationalist to the point of silliness," the King said. "In my sayings and actions I am not, but nobody really notices that I'm not. There is a compulsion that will not let me follow my bent."

"Well, what is that compulsion?" Brume asked. "You have everything going for you in your own realms. What can be the compulsion against?"

"The Kingship itself. A King receives his orders, and he does not know where they come from. It is very mysterious, gentlemen. I have talked with many other kings, and all say it is the same thing with them. The only man on Earth, I believe, who is under more compulsive orders than Kings is the Pope. He believes, and we also are constrained to believe, that it is known where *his* orders come from. Oh, the new Pope is flopping like a hooked fish! There are so many things he wants to do, that he had intended to do, that all his staff and most of his people want him to do, that he has gone into total frustration already. God is unaccountable, is unreasonable, and is I believe, mistaken in what he directs the Pope to do. But that is the way it has always been with God, and He is the only God we have. I believe also that it is God who compels me to do foolish things and to refuse opportunities."

"You are called the King of Italy. You can begin to act like it," one of the men said.

"Yes, I have been called the King of Italy for many years and it is like a big joke. I could take the joke out of it if I were allowed. I am the Duke of Savoy which is historically a part of France. I am acting ruler of unsettled title in the Piedmont, which is a very small piece of Italy. I am the King of the backward island of Sardinia off in the sea. But I am not the king of any of the Italian mainland at all, and I am in control of no more than a tenth of the Italian land."

"You have been King of Italy these sixteen years past," said one of the listening men, "by the grace of the Revolution, of the

Resurgence—”

“Which will happen some sixteen years in the future, by my count,” said another of the listeners. “Truly, you are a child of fate, Charles Albert.”

“I would have been a wonderful Pretender,” King Charles Albert said. “If they had me not, I would be an astonishing Prospect. Or, were I in exile, I would be one that men would die to bring back. If I went tomorrow, the Carlist thing would grow in our own hills. The sad case of myself and my people is that they have me, and so they cannot enjoy me *in absentia*.”

“Why, gentlemen, I have been a very good king, an exceptionally good king, and that is the difficulty. A nation with a bad king may believe that the situation would be remedied if they had a good king. But a nation with a good king will finally know that there is no remedy under kingship. ‘My Kingdom is not of this world,’ Christ said. ‘Nor is yours, or yours, or yours, or yours,’ the Holy Spirit said to us just the other day. Ah well, I believe I’d have been a good commoner if I hadn’t been a king. What will come next is kings to be led around on a string, and led around by second-rate men too. That will not happen to me. I will abdicate and then I will die. But it will happen to my son. It saddens me a little that I begot a son who will be led around on a string. All Italians will howl and clap in those years and it will be a glorious thing—only not really.”

“I believe the only kingdom that will survive this coming wave will be the Kingdom of Heaven,” one of the men said.

“The institution remains stable in Hell also,” Brume reminded them.

That had mostly been a king talking truth in his twilight, and his truth was that the king game was pretty well finished.

Dana Coscuin left Brume (who still had whole days of brimful discussions to hold with the leading men)—left him that evening and started towards High Spain by the land route.

It was in Port-de-Bouc on the way to Spain that Dana was handed a letter by a black-eyed imp of a girl, nine years old, and fanged like a wolf within her pleasant smile.

“Ten piastres for the service,” she said when she handed Dana the letter.

“I am sure that the sender has paid you already, girl.”

“Ten piastres, man, or I will put an incantation on you. Your teeth will turn inwards and gobble you. Your eyes will fall out and roll around in the road like marbles. Your urine will be full of worms.”

“One Italian soldo,” Dana said. “That is worth half as much as

ten of the seamen's piastres."

"All right," the witch-girl said with her beautiful fanged smile. She gave the letter to Dana and took the soldo. She wasn't finished, though.

"You cheated me," she howled when at a little distance. "Your teeth will eat up your tongue and the whole inside of your head. Your eyes will roll in the road and be eaten by goats. Your urine will be full of worms with teeth like saw-teeth."

"Do you know the charm to send auger-worms in by one's navel?" Dana asked her. "Once they begin to bore—Ah, what's this? Who writes this?"

"No. Tell me, tell me, the auger-worms," the girl implored. But Dana was reading the letter. It was written mostly in English, larded through with an oily sort of French, and it contained a few Irish phrases to make Dana wonder about the writer:

"Dana, the Boy who struts like a Man:

"I will use you, Dana, and then I will devour you. But we can have the pleasure of each other's company for months and even years while I work my way upon you. I want you badly. I have to do largely with colorless and tasteless creatures, and I anticipate a certain flavor in you. We can make wonderful disharmony together."

It was written large and muskily. It was in the hand of a powerful man.

"You sing badly, and you have only one song, Dana. Oh, but there are four of you in the unmelody that I will manipulate. You know a tall man who mumbles, but his mumble has a long and strong carriage. You know a German man whom you once believed to be a giant come back to Ireland. You know a black man named Oceaen, though you may have forgotten him for the moment. There is curious and incomplete music in each of your four voices and persons, but the blend of you all will be a devilish bit of art when my own power is added to it. And how is it that I know that you four will come together again? Dana, I am the Son of the Devil; sometimes I get a look at the script.

"I will even tell you the bait that I will use to take you with. I call you a coward, a liverless Irish coward. I say that you tremble in your bones and are afraid to meet me. I say that you are a boy too scared ever to become a man. And I know how you will respond. You will still be a liverless Irish coward, but you *will* meet me, to prove to your own self that you are not so cowardly as that. Ah, I will have you, Dana, by this bait to your death and damnation. The one without the other would leave me unsatisfied.

"You go now to a little brown girl who is my sister in the

kingdom. I tell you that I have had her before you; I tell you this to anger you. You are a coward even with her. She can break you. She can devour you at will. I only hope (I cannot see the script at this passage) that she does not devour you completely. I want to do that. Myself, or that little brown-skinned Mantis, one of us will eat you up.

"You are on the wrong side, of course. Stupid Brume won you back after you had been taken once. But you can become a man of reputation and use, and you will be called into use. You killed a man of mine in the hills behind St. Jean de Luz and not far from Baztan. He was a qualified man, just insane enough to be competent in these things, or I would not have sent him after such a man as Brume. Since you were able to kill this man, it is likely that I have underestimated you. Indeed you are a boy and a coward only in comparison to such a man as myself. There is somewhat more to you than to the common breed.

"Follow instructions now, so that we may become close friends in the short years before I devour you. Be in Paris right after the beginning of the next new year. We will have orgies of delight. Be in Paris in the Springtime; it will be a particularly enjoyable Spring. The Summer will be a little muggy, but I can promise you excellent shooting in the Eastern Marches in the Autumn.

"You have been contacted. You are afraid to be afraid, and so you will come. Then it will be I and Thou, and our unholy pleasure together. And, after the years of our pleasure, there will be only one of us. Which one of us will be the *I* when it is resolved? That is not certain. Were it not a gamble, I would not anticipate it so strongly.

"Escape La Sorciere, I beg you, for a timelier and more gory death at my own hand.

"Signed, in this world and in the other—

"Ifreann Chortovitch, the Son of the Devil."

Dana had heard of this man Ifreann before: from Brume, from men in the Carlist Hills, even from the ravens of the woods. It may have been that Ifreann was a handy man to hang legends on, or it may be that he generated legends. Whether or not he was the Son of the Devil, he was known to have had human birth in the Krakow region of Polish Austria.

"Ah, Son of the Devil, how do you do it?" Dana asked out loud when he had read the letter. "I will not admit that you are brainier than I am. How would I myself startle a man with my seeming omnipresence? The easiest way would be to be really present. You are not brainier than myself. You observe me by following me lately and by being at hand now. You gave the letter to the little

fanged beauty when I was in the sight of you both.

"Your eyes are on me from somewhere right now. Well, are your ears on me? Hear me then. I take it up. I put my power against your power. I put my sanity against your just-enough-insanity to be competent in these things. Devil's Little Boy, I am afraid of you only a little. And you are afraid of me at least as much. I can feel it from you. That is the way it should be. The fear musk and the excitement musk are part of the delight when two males set to battle with their minds and with their spirits and with their animals. I will meet you in every place you name. I will confound you."

Dana turned around completely, scanning his surroundings. He felt the eyes upon him, he even felt a strong friendship for their murderous presence. But the eyes could be anywhere in the circuit. Then Dana bawled out loudly:

"I'll meet you on your own field. Shake a little, Ifreann!"

And a little less loudly he said:

"But first I will go to Spain, to my friend upon the Earth."

He went down the road singing *My Name is Dana Coscuin* and he walked a long two-weeks walk. He came to one of the turns of his life and he made ready for it.

He was confessed of his sins at Prades; he entered Spain near Puigcerda.

VII

DANA, YOU HAVE THE WRONG GIRL

Dana Coscuin was in double danger of his life when he returned to the Spanish arena. The irregular Carlists would kill him, for the word had gone out those many months past that he had become a puppet of Elena Prado and of the other Queen's creatures. Even Tancredi Cima would kill him. Even Mariella, who was now the wife of Tancredi, would kill Dana if she believed that he was the creature of the creatures. And both of these persons had a huge love for the Dana they had known.

And the queer creatures would kill him even faster. There was a false Count, a false Bishop, a false Abadesa, and probably the false Elena Prado who would kill Dana in a blinking because he had not killed Brume nor led them to the Count Cyril, and because he had not remained subverted and hypnotized.

Dana had nothing to defend himself with except his tongue, and he was now believed, on both sides, to be double-tongued. And yet he did have other things. He had wits (they had grown in him almost unnoticed), he had talent for navigating on the narrow edge, he had the gift of communicating at a distance and without words. There was a strong rumor, picked up by several of either party, that Dana was returning to the Hills; yet the only active element in that rumor was Dana's own aura, sweeping out thinly to those of special sensing, in an arc a hundred miles beyond himself.

Dana had been absent from the Carlist Hills for nearly two years. He had been in high company many times; his reputation had grown; he was believed to know more about the machinations than he did in fact know.

"But much has happened in these two years, Dana. It is two more times around the whirlpool, two watery grooves nearer to the vortex."

"I am able to keep track of the seasons, *Padre gris*," Dana said.

"The Queen Isabella has married, you know that, do you not, Dana? At sixteen she married her cousin Francis, the Duke of

Cadez. This Francis is a curious creature, not what we desire in the male nearest the throne. He is dependent and effeminate. He wears layer upon layer of petticoats and, on the word of Isabella herself, he has nothing under them. He hasn't a man's wits, or even a boy's. He is a joke played on all the people of Spain, but who plays such jokes?

"Who will father the Queen's children? Nobody. She says that she will do it all by herself. Many insects do this, and Isabella is very like an insect in her waspishness, in her spiderishness, in her ever immaturity coming always mask-faced, cotton-faced, old-young out of the cocoon. And with such divergent and parthenogenetic insects the offspring is always female, so I see a long line of female children for the Queen.

"She has never lacked partners, though, not from her twelfth year. Now the sad fact is that, while all her intimacies are elaborated in a thousand stories every day, while her Dictators (first Espartero and now Narvaez) have killed twelve times as many persons as the Inquisition killed in its several centuries (but they have not been twelve times as often censured for it), while the poor are looted down to the very marrow of their bones and insulted in their every belief, while Holy Mother the Church in particular is vilified, while Spain herself is the object of derision of the new official Spanish humor (and Spain once had pride), the Queen and her government are tremendously popular with almost exactly one half the people of Spain. I believe that this thing, and things similar to it, will be tremendously popular with exactly one half the people in the world for the next several sad centuries."

"You are sure of your statistics, are you, *Padre cano*?" Dana smiled in the dark. "It will be exactly one half."

"It will be exactly one half, Dana. I have the proportions in my bones and have no need for statistics. And if there is an odd head left over in the world numbering, you and I will crack the head open, knowing there is something unright about it.

"In the system of the queer creatures, there is no need to dispense justice. Porneia, in its several forms, will do as well, and it is cheaper. The new Disestablishment and its whorishness becomes a perpetually established thing. Cowardice is really a better thing than bravery, and a perversion is cheaper to maintain than a child. *Puf! Puf! Pu!* Let the stones rise up! They will be better people than one half the people we have now."

Who says all that? The Black Pope, of course. Dana had gone to him at night. There was flinty truth in what the old man said, and it was the kind of talk to bring derision forever from almost

exactly one half of the people of the world.

"I have seen more of the porneia in the last two years than you have in your whole life, father," Dana told him. "You are like a child."

"I am not a child. It is the pornocracy which will *apparently* possess the future forever," the Black Pope was saying. "It is the easiest way, the cheapest way, the stultifying way, the indulgent way. It is only required to bawl aloud in the streets and in the journals for fame and fortune in that.

"Conjure up a prototype in your mind, Dana. It is a small shrill man, still on the fringe of youth in years, but he had never been young; he had never drunk ale in the land of the young. He was a preacher forever; he was born in the pulpit, and he had never left it to see what the world was like. That did not restrict him. His master is called Prince of the World, and he knows what half of the world is like. The pulpit of the preacher, you see, was the streets and the journals. The preacher affected comparison and concern. His voice was full of oily indignation. But he was seven kinds of a pornographer, and he was no other thing at all."

"This is no prototype, father," Dana said. "This is a person, was a person that you tangled with long ago. Is he dead?"

"He is dead, yes; he is with his father the Devil."

"I have heard lately from a live man who has the Devil for his father," Dana said. "Did you kill the preacher-pornographer?"

"Possibly I did. I had a checkered youth."

"Can you always tell the past from the present, Father?"

"Not always, but mostly I can. The thing, the thing we were talking about, Dana, is the left-handed devil and it wishes always to rule deviously. Should it become the actual government in any locale, and this will be rare, it will have no choice but to mock itself, as in our present Spanish instance. But it will prefer to maintain straw governments which it will pretend to oppose. But it will oppose only the rare good that is to be found in them.

"Is it so difficult to feed the poor in this world, Dana? Actually, it would not be very difficult; it seldom has been. It would even be easy for them to do it, and to do their whorishness at the same time. But the poor are as much to blame as the rest. Offer them a snake in one hand and a loaf in the other. One half of them will take the snake; one half of them will take the loaf. Those who take the snake will most often refuse the loaf even though they could have both. There is a syndrome between their misery and their whorishness. Offer them the snake only, as is done in Spain today, and all will go hungry. But half of them will take the snake avidly. Yes, the porneia will *apparently* take over the world, Dana."

"I want to marry the lady Elena Prado, Father," Dana said softly before the old man could begin another sentence. The old man swelled up like an angry frog. And he burst like one that has swelled too far. But when he had resumed his former size, then there came a quick glint of compassion and sanity into his eyes.

"All right, Dana. Bring her here. I will marry you: and I will guarantee you that there will be no trickery and no ambush. I wonder whether God or the Devil will be the more puzzled by it."

"I haven't been to see her yet. I'll have to devise a way. I believe that finally it will be that I marry her in her own place by her own priest."

"That is almost a certain death-ambush. Be careful."

"No. I am not even allowed to be careful in this. It's like crossing ice-fields or crumbling earth. The slow and careful man will fall. Worse than that, the careful man will fail. What I have to do I will do in as few hours as possible."

"There is something unnatural about your girl now, Dana. Last week we had a light snow. And of course she came as the snow witch and led a dozen of our young and not so young men to their deaths. Nobody knows why the men follow her on these Carlist raids that are death to the Carlists. But that is not the unnatural part.

"You will remember, when you yourself followed her on a raid just two years ago, that she was very nearly killed by a shot from Mariella the wife of Tancredi Cima. Huge Mariella hates and pursued the witch, but she never got another shot at her until last week. In that raid, though, she did get a very good shot, from above and behind. And Elena the witch reined around and faced her. The witch raised her hands above her head and laughed and waited. Mariella then fired at her with a rifle five times at a range of under forty yards, and Mariella is a better shot than any of the men. Listen now. *She did not miss.*

"Five marks appeared on the breast of the snow witch. On that raid she wore a snow-white smock under her red-lined cape. Five black marks appeared and then turned red. The Elena witch laughed again, wheeled her horse around once more, and rode off."

"And so there is one more colorful legend in the Carlist Hills."

"One more, Dana, but I believe it happened."

"I will make one more call, possibly two more calls tonight. May the Holy Ghost put new salt on your tongue, Father! The old is worn a little, I believe, and your tongue waggles woefully. I leave you in love."

"Go not that way, Dana. The only hut in that direction on the

ridge is that of Tancredi and Mariella."

"This I am knowing, Father. If I cannot win them back, who can I win?"

"He will kill you on sight: his sight; you will never see him. Then he will slit your gullet open and examine the rocks in your crop. He believes that humans have crops like birds. There will be one rock in your crop bigger than all the others together, he says. If it is green, then you were faithful after all, and he needn't have killed you. But if it is red, then you are faithless, as everyone here has believed, and you will have deserved killing. Your death will not matter in any case, he says. You will be with God afterwards, or you will not. And he is required to kill you. Tancredi is superstitious."

"So am I, *Padre tordo*."

"What color is the bigger rock in your crop, Dana?"

"Green, Father. Sometimes it's bright hard emerald. And sometimes it turns to green bitter bile, and I vent it on the idiocy around me. You be careful of it, Father. A single fleck of it'll burn ye."

Dana went along through the stony dark towards the choza of Tancredi Cima. It was a dangerous business.

"But he'll not hear me," Dana told himself. "He has no ears of his own. And yet he has ears."

Somebody had ears there. Dana had traveled a short mile, and he had not much further to go there. He could sense that he was sensed.

"And he'll not see me," Dana cajoled himself further. "He has no eyes of his own. And yet he has eyes."

Somebody ahead had eyes and ears at the ready. It was Tancredi, or it was his spouse Mariella with her more clever mind and more clever body. They could not both be waiting in the front ambush because—

—because one of them was now trailing Dana; and Dana was unable to distinguish which of them it was. The trailing one seemed a little too careless to be either of the Cimas: too noisy to be Mariella certainly, too light of weight (in spite of the noisiness of tread) to be Tancredi, or even Mariella for that matter. And yet Tancredi and Mariella were a couple forever, and there would be no third person in any mountain ambush of theirs.

Dana let himself be almost overtaken. He had scented the trailing one as a familiar, as a dog would scent a remembered person, and yet it was as if this one was greatly changed from previous acquaintance. Dana scented uneasiness in the trailer, a

touch of fear, and an impulse to action that must be prevented. The trailing one was going to sound, and that would not do at all.

Dana was onto the shadow-form quickly, bearing it down, pinning it, covering the mouth almost quickly enough, so that all that came out was the faintest of cut-off croakings: "Dana Cosc—"

It was a slight wiry male that Dana had there, yet stronger than expected. Dana whispered into one of the fearful ears in a voice softer than breeze over grass:

"You are a boy named Pedro."

"Yes." Dana would uncup the boy's mouth to allow only one single faint syllable out at one time.

"You are the same boy who brought us word, two years ago, that another Pedro, the man Pedro Curado had been killed."

"Yes."

"And that it was the death-witch who had murdered him."

"Yes."

"Now you have followed me to give me something."

"Yes."

"But it does not pertain to the death-witch, as I first suspected."

"I believe no."

"It is a letter that you have for me."

"Yes."

"You did not get it from a lady, and yet it comes at third hand from a distant lady."

"I believe yes."

"You do not know who or where she is?"

"No."

"Yet there will be a difficulty for me about this letter."

"Yes."

"The difficulty is that I will not be able to read it."

"I believe no."

"For you cannot read it, and you have tried. So it is not written in French or Spanish or Basque."

"No."

"So I will have to take it to the priest, to the Black Pope to read it for me."

"Yes."

Dana pulled the letter out of the boy's shirt.

"Speak no more," he said to the boy. "I almost didn't know you in the dark. You have grown and changed in two years. Count to one hundred silently as I leave you, and go quietly due north. That is down the angle of the ridge. When you come to your silent count of one hundred, then bleat loud and long like a sheep."

Dana withdrew on ghost-cat feet. He would solve the new

mystery of the letter before he ventured into the lair of the Cimas. How fast would the boy count, though, and how sharp were the ears of Tancredi and Mariella Cima? Dana stopped on the knuckles of the ridge; there was a correct tree below him, leafless and stark in the partial darkness.

The boy bleated loud and long like a sheep. Dana jumped, and came down into the high branches. The bleat should have covered the unnoisy leap down into the tree. And Dana descended the tree from the almost darkness of its crown to the total darkness of its lower branches. He climbed down it with none of that audible scratching that a cat or a squirrel is guilty of. When he reached ground he would be on a divergent path, and he would come to the Black Pope's place by another ascension. It was fun to trick Tancredi and his Mariella, to walk right into their open mouths, and to walk out again before they could snap him up.

Dana came down to the lowest branch. He smelled ground twenty feet beneath his feet. He dropped. But his feet did not come to ground.

He was caught in mid-air, and there was an explosive "oof." He was upended and slammed to the ground, and not on his feet. He was covered by a substantial weight. He received a sudden sharp slash in the throat, and the blade stayed there, freezing him for his life while his own hot and pungent blood oozed out of him in some quantity. 'One of the Cimas, at least, is smarter at night ambush than I am,' he phrased in his upended mind.

"You are the boy Dana," Mariella Cima mocked him, "the same who left his dear friends and joined the Queen's faction."

"Possibly, Mariella," Dana said, and shed more blood. He would have to choose his words carefully, words that would not bobble his Adam's apple still more bloodily into the relentless knife.

"As the Father told you, Dana, we believe that humans have crops like birds," Mariella was chuckling her deep woman's chuckle, "and we do have. I have cut more than one human crop open to see what was in it. Now I will cut yours open and see whether the great rock in it is red or green."

"No, you will not, Mariella."

"You believe, because I love you, that I will not kill you, Dana? Oh, I can love you as well dead as alive. I can love every dismembered member of you. When I was with my brothers and cousins and uncles, they often killed men, and I fell in love with one of them after he had been killed. I kept his body in a cave all one winter and I loved him completely. And my Tancredi loves you as he loves no other man on earth, and yet there is no man he would so willingly kill. What, Dana, what? The stone stirs in your

crop? Is it the treason of the red rock or the faithfulness of the green? Let us see quickly."

The big chuckling bloody-hearted saintly woman thrust two fingers down Dana's throat. He heaved, he retched. And Mariella chortled in triumph.

"I have it, I have it. Tancredi, come quickly! Fire the lantern. Let us see the color of the rock!"

Tancredi came noisily down the ridge. He fired the lantern as he came. He brought it into their midst like an explosion of light.

"It's green, it's green," he cried, and he had the big green rock out of Mariella's hand and into his own. "Oh, this gladdens my heart! Dana was faithful all the while. Our love for him was not misplaced. Now I almost wish that we hadn't had to kill him."

"I live and I will continue to live," Dana swore. Mariella had withdrawn her knife, and Dana tumbled her off and rose up. "By all the Saints of Spain, my throat will heal and I will live."

"Are you a man or a ghost?" Tancredi cried and took hold of him.

"Every complete man is both and I tell you that I am both. I'm alive, of course."

"Oh, it heals already," Tancredi jubilated, probing Dana's throat with his big fingers. "In spite of the blood, I now see that the cut has become quite a small one. Unless—Mariella, Mariella! Did you really take that rock from that cut in Dana's throat?"

"Certainly, Tancredi. Wherever else would I have gotten it?"

"Then it is a miracle," Tancredi said with great reverence. "It is the complete and miraculous vindication of the innocence of Dana. Already the cut is so small that a stone one quarter that size would not go through."

"By God and Mary and Teresa, it is a miracle this night," Mariella said with deep feeling.

"It does give a man mixed emotions to be the object of so great a thing," Dana said. He did have mixed emotions. That devious Mariella had hurt him damnably with her knife. She was the most playful person in the world, but she did play rough.

"I love the two of you more than I can find the words to say," Dana told them honestly, "but I will leave you for this night. I have several other pieces of business to transact."

"No. We will go with you," Tancredi said solidly.

"We want to know what is in the letter," Mariella said innocently.

"How could there be a letter in the middle of the night?" Dana asked.

"Could there be something the matter with our ears?" Mariella

grinned in the lantern light. "We want to know what is in the letter."

"And who she is who writes to you," said Tancredi.

"No. This I will go and find out alone," Dana insisted. "It may be that, in some future time, I will tell you two about the letter. You are entirely too long-eared. You should not so much as know that there is a letter."

"I said that we would go with you," Tancredi insisted in his turn. "What are friends for if they do not go along at such times? Dana, I have known miracles to be reversed!" And Tancredi had his own sharp knife at Dana's throat.

"As you say, my best friends, you will go with me," Dana murmured.

They went up by the different ascension towards the Black Pope's place for the reading of the letter. Tancredi went on ahead, and Mariella drew Dana back a little.

"I played a great joke on my man Tancredi," she whispered. "I did not, and you may have guessed that I did not, take the rock out through a hole that I cut in your throat."

"I know that you didn't. Mariella, you are wonderful," Dana told her.

"But I also played a joke on you, Dana," she whispered. "I did not take the rock out of your mouth either."

"You did not, Mariella?"

"The green rock, Dana, I had it in my hand all the time. I played a great trick on the both of you, you both being no smarter than boys. Your own great rock is still in your crop, Dana, and the color of it is known only to God and His Saints. It isn't true that I'd love you as well dead as alive. I love you best alive."

Who was the kidder in all this? Who was the kidded? Mariella tilted Dana's head back and licked the blood from the still oozing nick in his throat, licked it with a great, sweeping, lioness tongue. This husky girl was a primitive, a purring growling lioness indeed, and Dana was sometimes her cub. Mariella could heal with the same high amusement as she wounded.

They followed Tancredi on the blind, less-than-path climb. They came to the cave of the old priest, the Black Pope, and Tancredi had already set the oil lantern on the rough table.

Nobody had ever caught the Black Pope in a state of undress. As always, he was cleanly robed in complete black, with only his wax-white face and hands and ankles offering contrast.

"Dana has a letter for me to read," the old man was saying in his clacking voice (do not mistake the sound of this voice; it was not

clacking like pieces of wood striking together but like pieces of flint striking; there was even the smell of struck flint in the voice, and sometimes the sight of fire-spark). "If I read a letter for Dana, how is that the business of Tancredi and of Mariella?"

"The three of us have a single soul," said Tancredi, "and what concerns one of us concerns all of us."

"The two of us have a single curiosity," Mariella said more honestly. "We have itchy ears. We must know what the letter says and who it is from. We will spill blood to find out what it says. I am sorry, but our curiosity is always a passion."

"Oh well, it is no more than a letter from a girl," the old Father said. "The character of the hand shows the girl to be as ferocious in the wild-woman way as yourself, Mariella. It also shows the girl to be of startling intelligence, of a tomorrowish program, of a green-growing intuition, and of a corona-like flaming personality. It shows further, in the mixture of styles, that the girl has been schooled in Vienna, in Paris, and in England."

"Her writing shows all that?" Tancredi asked unbelieving.

"Yes, it does show all that," the old man said, "but I would not recognize all that in it except that I already know the hand and the girl."

"Does everybody in the world already know everybody else in the world?" Dana asked in exasperation.

"Everybody in the intense world of the two revolutions does know everybody else in that world, or will yet know them," the old priest said. "To the text then. It is written in Polish so that you would have to bring it to me to read, I being the only familiar with that tongue in these hills. It will therefore contain a message for me also. I will uncode it to myself as I go along, or I will keep the letter and uncode it later if it is difficult. It speaks:

" 'Dana my love—that is really the single name of you. My adversary the Devil wants your soul and body. So do I also. He has written to you, so I will write to you. Three things I will do to you. I will teach you the lore of the Green Revolution (I am the only complete adept at that); I will use you; I will marry you.' "

"Much better you marry that girl than the death-witch, Dana," Mariella interrupted. "I love this girl already, and Tancredi loves her also. It is all right, Dana. Go ahead and marry her."

"Oh hush up, Mariella, hush up," Dana growled.

" 'No, you will not marry the Prado *puta*,' " the old priest read on in the voice of the letter. " 'This has been disallowed, in Heaven by God, on Earth by myself. Nor will you find final death in that encounter. If it seems that you do, then I will come and dig out your body and reanimate it. I have never discovered the limit to

my powers; do not make me drive them to the limit in your case.

“‘And yet I will have you to follow the instructions of the Son of the Devil—almost. Be in Paris just *before* the beginning of the new year. It is necessary that you meet me before you meet him; and you will meet me in Paris. And it will be a particularly interesting springtime there. There are three things involved in all this: the Good Serpent, the Bad Serpent, and the World. We two sorts of serpents are involved in an apocalyptical conflict for the Good World. And it is a good world. It was made good. We will cleanse it and set it to the good growing again. This must be done constantly.

“‘And you are a poor lad from Ireland who does not understand about the two snakes, since there are no snakes in Ireland? No snakes in Ireland! I have been in Ireland. I have seen snakes driven in flocks like sheep as far as the eye could see. Do you not know that the ram-headed snake is a familiar figure in old Irish art? You eat snake-meat there, and you believe that it is mutton. So do we in Poland. So do we almost everywhere. But I will instruct you later.

“‘And you will also be, as my adversary commands you to be, in the Eastern Marches for the excellent shooting in the autumn and winter. You will be there; I will be there; the Catherine-cursed Son of the Devil will be there. And one or more of us will die there.

“‘You escape from the Brown-skinned mantis, Dana. I order you to do this. How else could you come to me?

“‘Signed in love, in this world and in the other—Catherine Dembinska.’”

It was the sound of the Polish name that broke up Tancredi and Mariella and Dana and sent them into spattering laughter. And this puzzled the old priest, the Black Pope. Like most Poles of the world, he was unable to understand that the sound of every Polish word and name is funny.

“Oh but I love her! Tancredi loves her. You also must love her, Dana,” Mariella was still chuckling. “Wherever did you meet her, Dana?”

“I have never met her. Never before in my life have I heard the name of Catherine Dembinska.”

And the sound of the name set the three of them off again.

“You will marry her, though, Dana. Tancredi and I will compel you to do it,” Mariella guffawed.

“Nobody will ever compel me to do a thing like that.”

“Oh, you’ll marry her, and we will all be there. And we will all be in Paris in the Springtime, and in the Eastern Marches in the Fall

and Winter."

"The young men are all bothered tonight," the old priest said inconsequently. "I can feel them all wakeful and wondering on their pallets. The devil's own lust has them this hour."

"This Catherine Dembinska whom I love, I will take her as my younger sister," said Mariella.

"She is older than you are, Mariella," the old priest said.

"Is it not wonderful that the Catherine who is a lady and who has been schooled in Vienna, Paris and England should become the sister of Mariella of the Mountains?" Mariella asked.

They broke it up after a while. Dana was going (he said) to his own cave, to clear it of the blown-in trash of two years, to stow his gear there, and to take up his abode there again. They all promised to go to Paris just before the beginning of the new year, and to the Eastern Marches in the next autumn and winter.

"I also may be in the Eastern Marches the winter after this one," the old priest said. "If there is to be excellent shooting there, well, I am an excellent shot."

Coming into the night-dark again, there was an uncanny spirit on the hills. Mariella knew it and looked at Dana with warning and tragic eyes before she turned away. Probably Tancredi knew it also. He knew everything that Mariella knew.

And Dana knew it strongly. "No wonder the young men are all bothered tonight, that they are wakeful and wondering on their pallets. The devil's own lust has them this hour," Dana echoed the old priest's words in his mind.

"If she is out this night, then I will go in by her small door and wait for her in her own place," Dana told himself. "The Polish girl's letter was strange, but there is something nearer with a lot more blood in it." He veered off from the way that would have taken him to his old cave. "My other and last encounter, I will have it also tonight," he said, "since the first encounters have gone well and with the loss of hardly a cupful of blood."

Dana Coscuin came to a certain mule path. And after a while he came to a remembered place where he had once, with correct instinct, stood upon a brown-skinned snake and punished her severely with his heels.

"But she is my friend upon the Earth and I am responsible to God for her," Dana said.

Dana came down the cliff above the Castillo of Elena Prado who was also Muerte de Boscaje, and was sometimes called the Death-Witch, and also the Snow-Bird.

"She chooses to go out of her own house at night by a hatchway

in the roof; to go up the cliffs and into the high hills; and to set up a twanging in the night-sleep of all the men. And she leaves loose the gramp-irons of the hatch cover when she is out, so that she can come back in the same way. Well, I will avail myself of her unconscious hospitality; I will enter and wait for her. I believe that she comes back almost right now. I feel her strongly and quite near at this minute."

Dana came noiselessly off the vine-hung cliff and onto the roof of the castillo. It was quite dark: clouded over, but without the Gothic lightning tonight. The darkness did not matter. Where Dana had been once, he could go again no matter how dark it was.

Dana lifted the lid of the hatchway on its always oiled hinges. He slid through. He let himself down. He hung, ready to drop. But something came to him, came under him, lifted him again, taking his weight so suddenly that it startled him.

"It is my Dana come back to me," said Elena Prado.

Dana was a straddle of her shoulders, a-ride of her neck.

"Oh be easy, Dana, I will carry you," Elena said, and she started through the swaying darkness with Dana a-mount. Dana took her heavy braids in hand, though; he toppled the both of them onto the stone floor, clamped her down, took a knife from her, took another, took a small pistol from her. Then he took from his own hat the candle stub such as many night men carry, lighted it, puddled it, waxed it to the stone floor. It showed Elena so contortedly beautiful and so disheveled that Dana was as wakeful and wondering and filled with the devil's own lust as were any of the young hill-men on their pallets. Dana, in fact, had Elena's stomach for pallet, and he held her heavy braids in such way that he could have broken her neck in a second. She was his friend on the earth, but he didn't fully trust her.

"And now we will talk, my little lark," Dana said.

"*Sí, seguramente*, talk to me, my Dana," Elena said.

And then it was a conversation that went on, verbally and carnally, for nine days.

Parts of the conversation took place in that same dark, stone-floored room below the hatchway in the castillo. Some of the conversations took place in the master chamber of that house; some of them in Elena's own large and richly cluttered room which she called her heart outside her body; some of them were in the big dining hall there. But many of the pieces of it were held out on the night hills when Dana tracked and took Elena at their darkness game. Some were in Dana's own cave. Others were on horseback or in coach. And still others were in the city of

Pamplona, in an inn there, in a rich house there, and in another house, an overly crowded and overly bohemian house there.

There was puzzled bitterness in such Carlists as happened to see the two together, and they were mostly the Carlists who were equipped with night eyes. Mariella would have killed this Elena Prado if she had caught her alone. She had tried to kill her before, of course, and had failed; never mind, she would have been able to kill her now. But both Tancredi and Mariella now believed that Dana had the green rock inside him and was himself faithful. It did not matter that Mariella herself had once palmed and foisted that rock; Mariella herself believed in it now. Neither of these true friends would harm Dana alone, or Dana and Elena together.

But there was harm enough and danger enough in the conjunction of the two conversationalists. Elena Prado was the shy and sheltered girl who was also a brown-skin snake and a death-witch and some other thing besides. Dana was a very fine young man, but he had a cave in the middle of him: a devil-door, a hell-entrance such as are often found in the Irish hills and in the Irish persons. Dana had been using this dangerous entrance for several days now.

"You are wrong when you say that I am your friend upon the Earth," Elena was murmuring as they lay bare and warm on cold high rock and watched a faint nacre-colored arc that would turn into dawn in an hour. "I am your friend from under the earth. I am such thing as comes out from under the rocks. How would people know of positions and passions if we snakes had not taught them? People, and particularly Christian people, are without real imagination in this. The Moslems when they were in Spain (they were not completely people as Christians and effetes understand the thing; they were a little more or a little less) knew the nine hundred and ninety-nine positions. They left as their legacy to the poor people of Spain only the ninety-nine. But I know all. Had you not suspected that I was of their brown-skinned line? I am of every old line. What do you think? Am I a brown-skin for nothing? How else do you want me, Dana?"

Rime-frost had been forming, and now a very light snow had begun. One would hardly say that the frail snow sizzled when it came onto the bare Elena, but it melted just before it touched and it gave a warm damp sheen to the hot-flesh girl. Sheep were bleating petulantly from the cold, but Dana was warm in an illicit summertime.

"I want you the right way," Dana said, "but I have to go down all the wrong ways to find you."

"Oh, you have the wrong girl, my Dana. I can be several different

creatures, but not *that* right one.”

“Yes. I have so much to pour out to you, Elena. And only the right way is spacious enough for it.”

“Oh, my way is spacious, Dana; it goes down and down. But are you such wine as can compel the jug? I tell you that I am a jug made of the obscene clay. I have been fired in a few furnaces, and none so delightful as yours, my Dana, and I am a ready enough jug; but I'm still of the obscene clay. What you want is a chalice and not a jug. I tell you though, my Dana, that the chalice isn't in it at all. It's too far removed from the Earth.”

“I will tell you something else, Elena: Christian men are not effete.”

“Always they are, Dana, always. Yourself, the times you are not effete are the times you also are not Christian.”

Elena slept then. She always slept and woke suddenly. And Dana also slept, but only on the fringes as he had learned in these last several years. There was real danger in them being discovered there by the dawn or daylight.

Some of the older Carlist men had smiled at the idea of Dana Coscuin trying to make an honest and Christian wife out of that *puta*. This can sometimes be done with a poor girl, but hardly in the whole world has it ever been done with a rich one. These Carlists understood (they were good at reading dispositions and dilemmas) the state of things with Dana. It was the sort of news that traveled on the wind, even the interior parts of it. These older Carlists did not smile, however, at the idea of Dana Coscuin becoming again a queen's creatures' creature. If, as seemed unlikely, Dana should escape with his life from the queen's men, these older Carlists swore that he would not escape with his life from themselves. And some of them were not even willing to wait for the developments of the Dana tale.

There is a moment right on the trailing edge of false dawn when a glimpse (an uncertified glimpse) of the future may be obtained. Elena Prado was asleep, bare and warm in the sifting snow. Dana was also asleep, but he was now directing his sleep to an end. Three times in his younger years in Ireland he had had these moments when he could see raggedly through the curtain. In one of those moments he had known that he would have to leave Ireland on account of his cousin Aileen Dinneen and his queer passion for her, would have to leave while it was still a comic thing and before it had become deadly. Now he had another Aileen with him. It could not even be said that this second one was more queer or more passionate than the first. In one realm of the unconscious they were the same, and were similarly

forbidden. And it was the same realm of the unconscious that would answer questions.

"Will I see Elena Prado again in two weeks?" Dana asked. Whatever would happen at this crux, it would be settled within two weeks.

"You will not," the realm said, and Dana was sorry to hear it. So then, he would lose Elena, according to this.

"Will I ever see her again?" Dana asked. The answer was not a verbal one. It was a mind garble, but it indicated that Dana would possibly see Elena again.

"In a year?" Dana asked. "In five years? In ten?" But the realm was silent.

"*Damnu siorai!*" Dana swore, "will I see her in twenty years?" There was some indication that he would. "And how will she look?" Dana asked. Well, how did she look now?

Dana turned and leaned over Elena. It was dark, but in the realm it was light enough to see by. It was, in fact, another place and time. It was a years-after dream of Dana, when he had come to his grayness, meeting again with Elena Prado who was one-eyed and bent and her face entirely of scar-tissue. That was not the shaking part of it. The spooky part was that Elena was as stubborn and lustful and snaky-triumphant as ever. There was more to this scene, there was much more.

It was depressing, it was haunting. Elena was a broken crone, but a lively one. And the scene was more real than their lying bare on the mountain rocks.

A sheep was bleating pitifully. Dana awoke on the rocks.

"Be quiet, thou *caora*," he told the sheep. "Thy dreams are not so wooly as mine."

"I'm between fire and ice!" Dana groaned in near agony. They were not now lying warm and bare-fleshed on the snow-sifted mountain rocks. They were dining together in a private room in a private house in Pamplona.

The two of them made a picture that was entirely Spanish and of most surpassing excellence. None but an absolute genius could have composed that picture: have detailed it, have integrated it: have used the shadows so richly, have set up the contrast and the tensions so vitally, have given it such unity and symbolism; and yet have muted the allegory to its proper place, have made of the room a world apart, a primordial cave with the deep grace of a mansion, a thing under water or under earth, or outside the ordinary sphere.

Dana was beautiful by the candle-light, and Elena was not. But

Elena was the major focus. Dana was golden, and wrapped in bright green. Elena was brown, and gowned in scarlet. She was incomparably intricate. She was both the fire and the ice. She was not disheveled now, except in her eyes and her tongue, and in her constantly moving hands: she was elegant. And perhaps she was again contortedly beautiful; yet masking this was a shocking ugliness, a mocking, triumphant, monstrous ugliness which she had assumed deliberately. Elena could be beautiful any time she wished, now she wished rather to be something more complex.

They were eating *cabrito*, roast kid. They ate it with their hands, but elegantly, not crudely. They wiped their fingers and faces with lumps of torn bread, and tossed these into the blue-black shadows. And the shadows raised to snap the lumps with white teeth. Part of the lurking shadows of the cave-mansion-room were amorphous animals somewhat on the order of dogs. These formed upward out of the shadows to take the living bread, and then melted back down into the shadows again.

"You have very feeble ideas about both the fire and the ice, Dana, and you have almost no idea about the persons involved," Elena was saying. "I will tell you about that Magdalena. I will tell you about that Cristo. And about myself.

"You would cast me in the Magdalena role, Dana, and I will not accept it. I am only half of her name, but she is much less than half of me.

"I will tell you about the Cristo also. Sometimes, when you sit in judgment of me, when you wish to reform my clay, you seem to believe yourself to be the Cristo. You are not. You are too pure, and you are, as yet, too shallow. I will tell you about Him.

"And I will tell you about me. And then, if I feel very unkind, I will tell you about yourself."

Elena split open kid bones with her teeth and took the marrow with a tongue that seemed too long and too roughened. She also flayed flesh off the bones with that long rough tongue.

She cut open the long bones laterally with her canine teeth which seemed sharper and stronger than the blade of a clasp knife. She took bones from Dana's plate and sundered them similarly. Elena was elegant, but she was not fastidious.

"The Magdalena had an occasional fast day among the feasts," she said. "It was no deprivation when the seven devils were cast out of her. They had become old and grubby, and she had newer and fresher devils waiting to enter. And the seldom fasts never confused her. She knew which were the feasts. She especially loved the great pork—to dine on it, and to be entered into by it. We will have a pork feast tomorrow."

Dana was physically weary. He was no boudoir athlete. He was shaken by the horror of his days-and-nights-long wrongdoing. He was sitting at night table with the fundamental mystery, manifested in a red gown. And the mystery had a carnivorous tongue that shredded meat and bones, and that took the flesh off his soul.

"You do not know the Magdalena, Dana, if you believe she is reformable into your narrow mold. And you surely do not know the Cristo. Was he so pure? I tell you that he held fornication with the woman at the well, with two other women that I forget, and with Mary Magdalena. The Luther wrote this belief, and several of the Luthers with whom I have talked believe it yet as a matter of course. And, to cow your own Irish sort of bull, all unbelievers believe it. They say that the Gospel writing of these things indicate that such took place, that the expressions are literary commonplaces.

"And, besides all this, I have private information and experience. This Cristo himself has come to me in this way; this little brown-skinned girl has had personal fornication with him. Such things are unliterary commonplaces in all of rural Europe. And I will tell you this: the Cristo knows the one-thousandth position."

"Were I home again in Ireland, were I home again in my wits, I would strike dead anyone who said such things," Dana grumbled darkly. "You lie and you blaspheme, Elena."

"Oh, I suppose so, Dana. And yet a person did come to me in such a way at night once, and he told me that he was the Cristo. Should I have told him that he lied? Well, he was the Cristo, or he was the Devil, or he was mad. But, Dana, he did know the one thousandth position."

"Christ will come into you, Elena, but not in that way."

"You are wrong, you are unnaturally wrong, Dana. I suggest you have a try at analyzing some of the dreams and visions of the great Teresa and the great Catherine. Study the context, study the symbols, study what symbols were not symbols at all but sheer reality. *Read what they really wrote* about their encounters. Christ *did* come in to them as I say."

"No."

Dana rose in moral revulsion. He left the contorted presence of Elena Prado; he left the cave-mansion-room; he left the house; he left the town. And he cried out his frustration like a shattered and sun-burned old desert-prophet who has been tested too long and who has failed the tests.

There are several versions of what happened next. One is that

Elena had men seize him on the night road, put him into a big barley sack, and carry him so bound to her castillo where she kept him prisoner.

There is a variation of this, that the men did seize a dazed young man in a green shirt and stuff him into a barley bag and carry him away. But when the bag was opened in the castillo, the young man in it was not Dana. Dana had in him a trifle of the *draoi*, the wizard. But more likely he had luckily come on a young man, stunned him with a quick blow, changed shirts with him, and made his own way out of there.

Dana was not made a physical prisoner in the castillo, whatever you may have heard. But he was still another sort of prisoner of Elena when they were next together: it was the next evening, and they were in the town of Estella.

They were together now in quite a different way. Things had changed completely and suddenly, so that they looked at each other and hardly recognized themselves as the same persons. Dana had changed. His despair was all gone; he was shining with new hope. And Elena had changed even more deeply. Nobody but a converted Magdalena indeed, or the most adept actress in the world, could have shown such such total change.

Why, Dana had won the victory after all! He had won it completely and in an absolutely unexpected manner. There had been divine intervention. Of course, there is divine intervention in every moment and place, but this had been in a special and spectacular form. Elena had taken counsel with certain spiritual advisors (she said), and they had opened her eyes and her heart.

(Elena had indeed taken long counsel with certain advisors, but they were not of the spiritual sort.)

There were not many words between them. There could not be; there were too many things that had to be passed over in silence. They ate fish and ashes that night in an abandoned hovel. The ashes were from the fact that Elena had failed in properly cooking the fish, but also (she said) as fortuitous sign of her penitence.

"I was a hardened sinner, and now I am again a child of God," Elena said. This was a rather awkward thing to say with conviction, and Elena *did* say it with total conviction. "Repentance came to me swiftly, Dana, and like a ghost. Now I will marry you in Christ, give all my wealth to the poor, and be as good a woman and as a good a wife as I may be for the remainder of my life. May Our Lady and Saint Teresa preserve me in this resolution!"

"Ah, let us go to the hills and wake the old priest and have him marry us at once," Dana said in his pleased daze.

"Oh, I'd be killed in the hills," Elena protested.

"You never have been."

"Rather we will part for now, my Dana, and spend the night, each in his own place, in chastity and contrition. We will be married at first flick of dawn, in my castillo, by my priest."

"It is I who would be killed at the castillo."

"You never have been. Come on the very end of the dark, Dana. Come through the roof. The hatchway will be left unbolted. A very small group will be arriving at almost exactly that time, and we will be married almost immediately."

"And will I be killed before or after the thing?" Dana asked with the last of his irony. He wasn't really distrustful; those were only some words that he had left over in his mouth.

"Why have you become afraid of danger, Dana? You were never afraid of it before. Trust in God, and in your own wits, and in my goodness."

Elena put ashes on her head and on her tongue with gestures that seemed too deep to be false. She put her hands on Dana's shoulders in all strength and chastity. And she turned and went out and away in the night. The nine-day verbal and carnal conversation was over with.

Elena Prado went again and took long counsel with certain unspiritual advisors. Never mind: who can say whether the spirit is present or absent in a group?

And Dana spent the night on the pallet in his own cave, chastely, and yet restlessly. He had been in and out of many traps before. He did trust in God. He did trust in his own wits. And he almost trusted in the goodness of Elena Prado.

When it was nearly time for him to do so, Dana rose and moved out of his cave. But instead of taking the way to the castillo of Elena Prado, he took the path to the den of the old priest. He awakened the old man and was confessed by him. And that seemed to be all of it.

"I had thought that you might want to question me about other things," Dana hazarded.

"What is to question? She will not come to me, so you will go to her and her own priest who is the New Bishop."

"Well, will I be killed there?"

"That is not for me to tell you. In any case, it will not matter. You are in grace again, so it will not matter if you are killed."

Dana left the old man then, on that rather chilly note. But he still wanted advice as he went back along the path. He asked this of Christ, of the old priest who had not given it to him directly, of

the skull of Christian Blaye (that third noteworthy thing in the angry shrine back in Hendaye), of rough Brume wherever he might be now, of the Count Cyril. And the answer came in the voice that had to be that of the Count Cyril. Dana knew all the other voices, including that of Christ.

"Whatever you do, do quickly."

And Dana moved quickly, down the path, down the mule-road, down the cliff-side in the lessening dark, onto the roof of the castillo (not a half hour had gone by in all this rapid action), through the hatch.

"Fasten the bolts after you, Dana," Elena Prado said. She was standing below him holding a candle. But Dana did not fasten the bolts. He fumbled with them and he pretended to fasten them, but he did not. Well, even Elena had told him to trust in his own wits. There had been something wrong with the castle yard as he had come onto the roof. More than a very small group had arrived. Every shadow and shelter was filled with silent horsed guards.

The false Abadesa was there, she who showed too much bare neck and shoulder and bosom to be an Abadesa of the old sort. She took Dana in her arms as he came down from the hatchway, and it was wrongly pleasant to him. Dana toppled her onto the stone floor, and Elena and the Abadesa went into ringing laughter. Oh well, weddings are supposed to be gay, and that false Abadesa had always had an Irish look about her.

Then there was a crowd of people in the little stone-floored room. Surely the wedding should have been in the castillo chapel. But, no, it would be right here. The count who was not Count Prado was there. "Why have you not killed Brume?" he hissed to Dana. The three young philosophers were there. "When will you tell us where the Count Cyril may be found?" one of them whispered angrily to Dana. "Tell us now, or there will not be any other time. For your life, tell us now." "Go to Hell," Dana told the young philosophers gently.

And the New Bishop came into the room, already vested. He began the wedding mass almost at once, and it seemed a curiously abridged version. He was in a great and fearful hurry. With these people also, what they did they would do quickly.

Elena Prado the bride, but she was not dressed as a bride, pressed closely to Dana on one side; the false Abadesa pressed closely on the other. Both were rather more fondling than they should have been at mass, and both were much stronger than would have seemed possible. In fact, they had Dana pinioned.

The denouement came quickly. It was the Offertory of the Mass. How could it be so soon? It was quite clear that this was not

Christ's proper mass.

*"In quorum manibus iniquitates sunt: dextera eorum repleta est muneribus—*In whose hands are iniquities: their right hand is filled with gifts," the Bishop hurried on. *"Te interficio, Dana, pistola ista,"* he added with a change of tone, and those words do not properly belong in any mass whatsoever. But the false Bishop had a pistola in his right hand and he was going to kill Dana with it right now.

A number of things happened at exactly the same time. There was the holler of bolts not quite cramped, and the spilling down of daylight from above to confuse the candlelight below. Elena Prado had cast herself flat on the stones like the clever snake she was. But Dana was able to fling the false Abadesa into the bishop's pistola. As she intercepted the shot, Dana was up on her shoulders before she could crumble. "Above you, Dana," came a hearty voice from Heaven, or at least from the roof. It was that of Mariella Cima who can never be praised enough. She grasped Dana by the hair of his head and jerked him up through the hatchway, up from the shoulders of the Abadesa who was shot dead but had not yet had time to fall.

Saved by the hand of the giantess, and below was Elena Prado's moan, "Oh my Dana!" Elena was snake, but she was other things as well.

And then the giant's hand came down. Tancredi Cima flung a great kettle-bomb, the grandfather of the grenade, into the hatchway. And he slammed down the hatch. It blew off again, though, and it nearly took his hand with it.

And how was it with them below? All dead and exploded in their flesh? It had to be so. And yet Dana had seen, in an almost valid dream, a future meeting with Elena after he himself had come to his greyness. She would be one-eyed and bent and her face entirely of scar-tissue. But stubborn and lustful and snaky-triumphant as ever: not dead, not dead.

"Not the cliff!" Dana cried. There were men on the roof to take them, and they were between the three and the cliff. The men were half-blinded by the sour black smoke that had exploded up out of the hatchway, but the three were also half-blinded.

"Dana, Tancredi, Mariella," came a voice from the castle yard, on the opposite side from the cliff, "three black horses from the Count Cyril."

And there were three black horses there, ready and empty-saddled, but there was nobody to whom that voice could have belonged. The intrepid three were off the roof and into the saddles. Fifty guards on their white horses were about them, but

how could these catch an inspired three on the blacks? Mariella unslung a long rifle (her own!) from a saddle sling and began to shoot guards out of their saddles so rapidly that it had to be a contrived burlesque. Mariella had had something to do with the appearance of these three black horses in spite of the fact that she had come to that place down the cliff by hand and foot.

"Where, where?" Dana cried, as they were through the shell of the white-horsed guards but closely followed.

"To France," said Tancredi in his booming carrying whisper. "There will be no safety for us in all Spain for some time."

"Which is the road?" Dana howled. There were a dozen possibilities, but some one way must be set first in mind.

"Straight for Laruns," Mariella decided in a wild voice. "It is further to the border, but there is nobody between us and it."

They rode madly, and, after pursuit had slackened a little, a little less madly, out of the bleak hills of Spain to the merry meadows of France.

VIII

SELECT COMPANY

They went ninety cruel miles in three days, going much of that time at night.

"It occurs to me, Mariella," Dana said, "that you have never been out of Spain, that you have never been more than twenty miles from your own spire in the hills. How is it that you are so sure where we should go? You are an illiterate. You don't know what a map is for. How can you know just where we should go, in light or in dark? If we fall down one more ravine, I will doubt that you do know."

"Trust me, Dana, trust me," Mariella said. "It is not my fault. If the horses were surer-footed we would not fall down half so many ditches. I have known birds nearly as illiterate as myself, as like to hold a map upside-down as straightways, but tell them the name of a town and they could fly there straight. So can I. When you are with me, there is no doubt of us going by the best road."

It was misty morning. They were over the border and nearly to Laruns. And there, now in the middle of a not too rough way, they were surrounded by bandits.

"Shall we?" Dana asked his companions. He was ready enough for a caper or a death battle, if they were with him in it.

"No, we shall not," Mariella Cima said softly. Mariella had to be right. She would have battled readily if there had been reason for a battle. "I see that there are good kind men here," she said, "and we will give them anything they want."

"Only the Count Cyril's horses," the leader of the bandits said. "There is other need for them now and you must give them up. I know you will not mind walking the four hundred miles."

"When did you see the Count Cyril?" Dana asked, very interested. But Dana was misunderstood, a thing that happened before at the mention of that man's name. Or it was that the bandit leader pretended to misunderstand him.

"When you have pay from the Count Cyril?" he asked. "Perhaps you will receive it from someone else along the way, but not from

me. I will relieve you of the horses. That is my present duty."

"I have taken a liking for my black horse," Dana declared. "I will fight you all for him."

"It isn't possible for you to fight us," the bandit leader said easily. "There are too many of us for you to fight. And we are also in the employ of the Count Cyril; there cannot be conflict in our company."

Mariella and Tancredi had already dismounted and given their horses up to the bandits, and they would never have been overawed by mere numbers of opponents. Dana also gave up his horse with puzzled regret. And the bandits gave cheese and bread and wine and potatoes to the three of them for a meal.

"Magdalena Brume sends her love to Dana," one of the lesser bandits said.

"Let her not send him too much love," Mariella warned. "He is in my love now."

"Christian Blaye, the stark head of him, sends his good wishes to all three of you," another lesser bandit said, "and he wishes you could have come his way, but he knows that you have chosen the better route."

"I will crack walnuts on his skull on my return," said Tancredi Cima. "I love what little is left of him more than I love any fleshed man, except Dana."

"Jude Revanche sends his hate, Dana, and says that he will yet cut your throat," still another of the bandits told them.

"Somewhere I had heard that he was dead," Dana protested.

"Somewhere we had all heard it," the man said, "but he isn't."

(Jude Revanche was the squarish bearded man who had once cursed Dana Coscuin in a roadway at Hendaye and said that he would put a pig-knife between his ribs and that he would burn down the Carlist Hills.)

It was indeed true that all persons of the two Revolutions knew or would know each other.

The three pilgrims walked that day and slept in a haystack that night. They had exchanged the rocky roads of Spain for the dusty roads of France. They resumed their journey the next morning, Mariella always directing them on the correct way. At Pau (on *Gave de Pau*, or Pau Torrent) Dana received new Count Cyril gold for his purse. He received this from a silent farm woman who looked out of an unfamiliar face with familiar eyes. Dana had developed the fancy that all his paymasters had the same eyes, however else they differed. "From the Count Cyril," the woman finally said, but nothing else.

The next day, or perhaps the day after that, they were in the

town of Aire on the Adour. They had been coming through hayfield and wheat stubble and pine tree and walnut country, which was also the land of the big pale-yellow bulls. It was at Aire that Tancredi received his own Count Cyril pay. The man who gave it to him had the appearance of a village notary, and he seemed to find the task distasteful. "From the Count Cyril," the man said.

And later that same week, Mariella received Count Cyril pay at Casteljaloux. This was unexpected. Mariella had never received direct pay before. It was a full and handsome townswoman who paid it to her. "From the Count Cyril, my *poulette*," she said. "Stay with me under my roof tonight. It is enough that your men should sleep under the good sky."

"I will do it," Mariella grinned. "Really, I have always considered myself somewhat better than these two men."

"It will be all right now with France, I believe," the full handsome woman called back over her shoulder as she made off with their Mariella. "The Blessed Virgin appeared this week to two children not fifty miles from here."

"It is sure that she was the Virgin?" Dana asked.

"Yes. She was wearing her blue mantle."

On the edge of Marmande two or three days later, they met Kemper Gruenland, the giant that Dana had once fought at Castletown Landing on Bantry Bay in Ireland. Big Kemper (Who arranges these things anyhow? Who arranges them?) had been waiting for them.

"You Dana, you Tancredi, you the woman, you are all under my orders now!" Kemper called out roughly. "Move quickly. We will travel all night. Do not pretend weariness because you have walked all day. I will have the woman into the inn here for a short quarter hour. Be ready to travel after that." Big Kemper had shoved in his ante but he didn't really understand this game.

"No man will ever have me except Tancredi," Mariella said. "And we are *not* under your orders. Actually all are to be under my own orders, but we are to pretend that we are under Dana's. I know who you are, big man, and you will enter into my love as Dana has. But you will be under our orders."

Tancredi had his hooked knife in his hand.

"I will show you, big man," he said, "how we treat with your sort in Sardinia."

"You the Sardinian!" Kemper roared with contempt. "But it is I who have been doing bloody work in Sardinia for these several years. It wasn't you who was selected for it. Even Dana was there in the Sardinia, and he did not know that I knew it. But you were

selected for nothing. We fight now, stumbling Tancredi.”

“Give me the hooked knife, Tancredi,” Mariella said with authority. “We will have no murder in our gathering company.”

Tancredi gave her the hooked knife. Then Kemper and Tancredi joined battle there on the edge of Marmande.

Kemper Gruenland was tall and bulky. Tancredi Cima was even taller, but lean. To ordinary men, both were giants. They began both with giant earth-quaking blows, and loungers from town and country were gathering to watch them.

They had the strength and the epic awkwardness of true giants. They entwined, and they broke away again. They were like big bears on their hind legs, slaving, snorting, roaring, crashing blows, breaking quickly to blood. They were too strong for their forms; they began to break each other up; one could almost imagine that pieces were falling off them as they battled. They fought with hand and foot and butting head. Both were slippery with blood and cloudy-eyed from the blows. They heaved and struck and wrestled. And both buckled a little at the knees after a while of it.

And Mariella was laughing like chimes.

The battlers grunted great grunts and went at it still more strongly. They punished each other. They made a large noise. They groaned, and they breathed like hippopotami in labor.

And Dana was laughing like Billbury Bells.

“You and I, Dana,” Mariella guffawed then. “We take it from them now. And later, when they are well again, we will give them instruction in the art. We will show them forever who gives the orders. You and I, Dana my love.”

Dana moved onto Kemper Gruenland and spun him out of it. And Mariella had Tancredi.

Dana moved in with the head toss of a young bull, as he had once moved in at Castletown Landing. Again he landed a series of shocking blows. But there was a difference now. The other time was before Dana had been with rough Brume. The other time Dana had been the strongest fast man from the Bays area: now he was more. He had learned hand combat from the rough master himself, and he was both a stronger and a faster man than he had been before. He timed, he stalked, he exploded, he demolished. As once before at Castletown Landing, he gave three murderous, ox-felling, fist-axe chops at the open face. And he stepped back to let the giant fall. It was not as it had been before. This time the giant did fall unconscious. Dana had brought Kemper down with just nine blows, and had taken none.

And Mariella, lovingly, violently, had stretched Tancredi in an

identical bloody unconsciousness on the ground. This wonderful hefty beauty (she can never be praised enough) was unconquerable in this world, even by members of the foul sex.

"You and I, Dana," she said. "May they never doubt us."

The two of them shouldered the two large unconscious men and carried them to a nearby hayfield. The loungers and admirers from town and country brought them wine and onions and a long loaf for supper. They lay up there for three days till their two casualties should be ambulant again.

Dana and Mariella spent the time talking of the wonderful world of politics and affairs with townsmen and farmers: drinking brandy and playing a species of darts at the inn, drinking buttermilk and pot beer and playing a species of cards in the farmhouses.

"Who is the King, the King of it all?" Mariella asked once. "Nobody mentions his name, and I am curious."

"In our own France we have the Citizen-King Louis Philippe, he of the pear-shaped head," said a farmer.

"I do not mean just the King of France; I mean the King of all places," Mariella said.

"In your own Spain, the King is a Queen, Isabella II," a farmer's wife contributed.

"Also in England, the King is a Queen," said a farm laborer there, "Victoria."

"In Austria it is Ferdinand I, who is also said to rule in Hungary," said a knowledgeable farmer. "Hungary, however, is a three-winged chicken, and Szechenyi of the right wing, Deak of the middle wing, Kossuth of the left wing do not acknowledge Ferdinand loudly."

"No, I mean the King who is King of them all," Mariella insisted.

"Pius IX is Pope. To me he is above them all," said a laborer.

"No. I mean his correspondence as King," Mariella still tried to express it.

"Nicholas is King of Russia, and also of Congress Poland, much against the wishes of the Poles," the first farmer said. "James Knox Polk is King-President (he who presides) in America. King Frederick William is King of Prussia. Leopold I is King of Belgium. William II is King of the Netherlands."

"Charles Albert is King of Savoy and Piedmont and Sardinia," Dana said. "I have met him. Grand Duke Leopold is King of Tuscany. There is a different Ferdinand I who is King of Naples and Sicily. I am not sure, though. He may be dead. Another may be King there now."

"Frederick Augustus is King of Saxony," the farm-laborer said.

"There is a feathered bird called King of Saxony," Mariella said.

"Ernest Augustus is King of Hanover," the laborer continued. "Louis Augustus is King of Bavaria. Sultan Abdul Mejid is King of Turkey."

"None of you knows what I am trying to say," Mariella protested. "The Count Cyril would know who is the legitimate King of the Realms. The Count Cyril is one of his ministers."

"How could you so much as know that there is a Count Cyril?" the knowledgeable farmer asked. He sounded both surprised and frightened.

There were several sorts of hardships about, the people said. The potatoes everywhere in Europe had partially failed for several years, though not totally except in Ireland. There were various mixups about moneys and wages and debts. People either worked long cruel hours or they were not able to get work at all. The people were not driven down so deeply as they had been in 1789 when they revolted: not even so deeply as they had in 1830 when they revolted. But now they expected more and were entitled to more. Being not so weak as they had been at the other times, the people would be able to revolt more strongly. "I see no end at all to the blood we will spill this time," the knowledgeable farmer said. "I was a younger man in 1830 and I say that we did not spill nearly enough blood then. Something always seemed to go wrong and thwart us. There are many things about the revolutions that I don't like. I never liked the killing of priests in revolutions; I love the priests as I love my own family. Still, if everyone else is killing them, I suppose that I will do it too. One does what is expected of him if he is a good citizen."

"We are the first knowledgeable common people," said the farmer's wife. "Many of us have been to school; in almost every family there is someone who has been to school. This has never happened to the common people in all the world before. It is by this, however, that we have lost confidence in the higher classes. Being ourselves educated now, we see how much is lacking in all education. Before we had it, we thought that education was magic; now we know that it is muck. If the higher classes are on the same level as ourselves in this, then we are not really effecting anything with all of our doings. Our whole country, probably the whole world, is a boat adrift, with a broken tiller, with feeble oars, with rended sails. The navigator has forgotten where we are supposed to be going, and the man who writes the log has forgotten where we have been. I wonder we get along as well as we do. Really, we do not get along badly. Somebody is having fun

with us in all this, but we can also have fun (some of it very rough fun) as we go along. God, I believe, is a great humorist. I don't know whether He has it all figured out, or whether He makes it up as He goes along."

"The fightings and killings have already started in a dozen parts of France," the knowledgeable farmer said. "This is all to the good. Nobody is quite sure what the fighting is about yet, but it is good to get it started. In many years, it is almost impossible to get conflict started."

Several days had gone by there in the neighborhood of Marmande. Tancredi and Kemper agreed that it was time to be on the road again. They were not well, but they would die if they lay in that snow-covered hay any longer. Mariella, who was too vital ever to have been cold in her life, did not understand their objections to sleeping under the beautiful sky. She believed that sleeping under the beautiful sky would cure anything. And Dana, who was too stubborn to admit ever having been cold, though he had been, would still go about in his green silk shirts with nothing over them; though he did procure great coats for the two frosty giants.

It was a crisp mild day when they took the road again.

"We may have to hurry," said Mariella. "Or else we may make it easily and in perfect time with our present good pace. There is one detail I have to settle. Which come sooner, Krakow or Paris?"

"Paris comes very much the sooner," Dana said. "I believe that perhaps I should serve as guide, Mariella."

"I believe that you should do no such thing, Dana. If Paris comes sooner then we will make it easily enough. It is Paris that we will be in barely this year then, and Krakow about the same time next year. I was never lost, of course, and now I am even less lost."

"I also believe that some other one of us should serve as guide," Kemper said.

"Oh no, absolutely no. I am completely inerrant. No one of you even knows the color of the house on the other side of this hill. How could you be guides to Paris? With the migrating birds you also hear them talk this way. 'Which comes first, America or Africa?' you may hear the guide bird ask the others. But he knows the way all the time. He speaks in humor. Do you know that we will meet another member of our forming company at Blois?"

"I myself would not go by way of Blois," Dana said.

"I know of no one we are to meet this side of Paris," Kemper told her.

"I did not so much as know that we were a forming company," Tancredi said.

"Yes, we will meet another companion at Blois, and he will go along with us on our way," Mariella said. "Our company will be complete then, except for Dana's wife. We will meet her one week later. Then our ring will be closed and invincible. There will be Dana, and his three grenadiers; and my adopted sister, his wife; and myself, Mariella of the Mountains, the old mother goose herself."

Mariella was by several years the youngest of these young people, but she often spoke of herself as the old goose.

At Blois on the Loire they did meet another member of their forming company.

But it was Kemper who had all sorts of information when they did come into Blois, no mean town.

"Saint Deodatus was a Saint of this town," Kemper said, "as was Peter of Blois, much later. Louis XII was born in yonder fine château: and several States-General of France were held there."

"Ah, let us hold another States-General of France there then," said Dana, "now, of ourselves, and by ourselves. Who is to say that it would be illegal?"

"The older building we come to on the other side is Notre Dame des Aydes," Kemper said a little later. "It is a place of pilgrimages. It is noted for its statuary. The striking statue before the door there, of the gray limestone and with the inset face of black marble, dates back to the thirteenth century. It was carved by Augustin Blosius, which is to say August of Blois. It is called Le Moine Moricaud."

"I have taken rooms for all of us at the Red Fox," the gray limestone statue with the inset face of black marble said. "We will spend several days here and clean up. We will have to present better appearances from now on. We will still be the strong sly fighters, hard as rocks and evasive as fog, but we will also be personages."

Kemper was startled to hear this, but the others were not. That the statue was a man should have been plain: but he could have passed as a statue among statues there if he wished.

"You talked Dutch at Jane Blaye's place in Hendaye," Dana said, "and you talked English at the other place there. Now you talk French; you talk it worse than you talk the others, and yet it is plainly your own tongue. Who are you?"

"I am a thirteenth century piece by August of Blois," the man said. "Kemper has just told you so. But he is wrong to say that my face is of black marble. It is of obsidian stone from the volcano named Soufriere on the island of Basse-Terre."

"His name is Charley Oceaan, Mariella," Dana said. "He is a black man."

"Oh, that is what he is? I thought there was something the matter with him. Whenever I foresaw him, there was this something different about him. Is Oceaan the same as *Océano*? You are Carlos de la Mar?"

"Likely I am the same person, Mariella," said Charley. "Let's go along to the inn and roistering house."

"I remembered the description wrongly," Kemper was saying. He still wasn't satisfied that what he had pointed out as a statue had turned into a man. "This statue was supposed to be by the *North* door of Notre Dame des Aydes. And I do remember this man from Hendaye. He was drinking Holland gin and eating cherries."

"Well then, if my wife foretold him, and if Dana and Kemper know him, he has to be all right," Tancredi said in accepting Charley. This man named Oceaan was not of vivid resolution; if he had been, he would not have been mistaken for a statue, not even for a moment. He was black, but not of shining spectacular black. In fact, Tancredi Cima the Sardinian was at the same time of a deeper black and a very deep red. No man ever had such depths of color as Tancredi, and no one would ever mistake him for a statue. Charley Oceaan was of a tame color beside Tancredi, but there were some indications that Charley was not a completely tame man.

"Where is the island of Basse-Terre whence you have your face?" Dana asked Charley Oceaan a little later. Now they were at the Red Fox, the inn and roistering house.

"You astonish me, Dana," Charley said with puzzled amusement. "On Basse-Terre, where I was born, there is a site which the people call The House of Dana Coscuin. The house is not built yet, but all the people know where it will be. There is also a less inhabited site which the people call The Grave of Dana Coscuin, though the grave is neither digged nor filled, and will not be for many years, I hope."

"It is on a hill, the grave is, and one can see the ocean on three sides from there," Mariella Cima said.

"Yes, Mariella," Charley agreed. There was something about this Charley Oceaan that puzzled Dana and would puzzle him for all the years to the end. Was Charley a very simple man, or was he highly complex? He had the ease and sureness that can belong either to complete simplicity or complete sophistication. He was a black man who had learned several languages and sets of manners. He had traveled; he moved well in any company; he, indeed, was hard as rocks and evasive as fog; he was intelligent,

and he showed indications of being witty. But had he lost anything of his simplicity?

"And how am I to come to this island of Basse-Terre, Charley?" Dana asked. "How am I to build a house there, and how am I to die there? And me not even acquainted with the place."

"I believe you will first go there with me when I go back to visit my first home," Charley said. "I believe you will become attached to it then."

"How did you leave it?" Dana asked.

"I left it on a Dutch ship, that being the first to sail from there after I had made up my mind. As to why I left, I must tell you some of the things that my father used to say. He was a very poor and unschooled black man of Basse-Terre which is also called French Guadeloupe. However, he had a very large head stuffed full of brains. My own head is also stuffed full of them, but it is physically much smaller than the head of my father.

" 'Basse-Terre is the fairest land in the world,' he used to say, 'but there is something very much wrong with it. It is a little land on a leash of a bigger land. There is something wrong with the leash, there is something wrong with the bigger land, there is something wrong with the whole world. What is wrong, we must make right, Charley. I will work here to make it right with our island. You go out, Charley, and make it right with the rest of the world. It has to be done from both ends. We will not see each other again in this life. When you know that I am dead, though, come back here and pay me honors. At that time, you will have come to a pause in your own task, and a change in the scene of it will be indicated.' I did as my father told me. I am about the business of straightening up the world now. You four will work with me in this for a while, and for a shorter while a fifth person will work with us. As to our straightening up the world, we won't be able to do a perfect job of it. But, should one somehow in some other context see the world as it would have been without our intervention, that one could immediately see the very great difference."

"How will you know when your father is dead, Charley?" Dana asked.

"Oh, he'll send me an Ocean dream to inform me of it."

"Why do you ask foolish questions when you could readily guess the answers, Dana?" Mariella asked. "Charley will think you are stupid."

Yes, they were in Blois and at the Red Fox for several days. They spent Christmas in Blois. Then went to mass at the Capuchin

house in the morning. Then each of the five of them found a beggar, and they brought them all together to the Red Fox for a royal and roaring feast.

"What we need is a king who is a king," one of the beggars said. "There is no sense at all in having a Citizen King. We are either a kingdom or we are not. We must be a true Kingdom if we are to mirror the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. Who ever heard of the Democracy of Heaven? Who ever heard of a Citizen God? We are an imperfect mirror, and that is the source of all our troubles."

(All beggars, as you may or may not know, are staunch conservatives. They are monarchists in their very bones. If they are at the very bottom, they want to know that there is a very top.)

"What we need is more charity," said another of the beggars. "We know that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and we have taken the less blessed role. But it worries me, and it should worry everybody, when the givers do not give as they should, when they do not avail themselves of this Heaven-sent grace. We worry for their souls. We ourselves in our lesser role, are not deficient. Do we ever refuse to accept? We will do, in our own small and imperfect way, everything that we possibly can to assist our betters to this grace. We pray day and night that the more fortunate ones may attain this grace and finally be saved."

"What we need is more meat and less potatoes," said a third of the beggars. "There is less potatoes, it is true, from the state of that harvest, but there is not more meat. I sometimes believe that the richer folks are keeping it all to themselves. Onions and cabbages and potatoes are all very well, but there should be more meat. We are only trying to assist you to grace when we suggest this."

"Oh, there is more meat," Charley Ocean told them. "It is roasting in big joints. It will be done soon. The meat that is in the soup is not all the meat. There is pig and beef coming, and goose. And bread with live honey, and other beer and other wine."

"What we need also is warmer clothes," said the fourth of the beggars. "There are folks so warmly clad that they do not even notice that winter has rolled around now. But it is here, I tell you. It snowed yesterday and it will snow again tomorrow. There was ice on the ponds this morning and it is hardly gone yet."

"But Mariella has given a new cloak to each one of you," Tancredi pointed out.

"Those things?" the fifth beggar was contemptuous. "The woman must have bought them at the thieves' market. Oh, they are warm enough, I suppose, but they are low things with no style

at all. They are things such as are given only to very poor people. I believe that very poor grace attaches to the giving of poor gifts. I will go even further. I will say that these cloaks are in the Spanish style, and as such they are only fit to be worn by Spanish people or by mules."

There is no way of telling whether Mariella was hurt by these remarks. She *had* bought the cloaks at the thieves' market, and they were somewhat in the poor Spanish style.

"Do you people ascribe to the Rights of Man?" asked one of the beggars (he was either the second or the third beggar).

"We ascribe to the Rights," Kemper told him. "We do not ascribe to the society of that name. In any case, the society has disappeared."

"In any case, the society has formed into a dozen new societies," that beggar said, "and their ideas will never be put down."

"Some of their ideas *will* be put down," Charley Oceaan said, "and some of their ideas will be elevated. For that we are here."

"It was said of old that you could know the Devil by his cloven hoof," the fifth beggar said. "I say that you can know the Devil by his cloven tongue. You all of you speak two ways and you all of you are foreigners. What do you do in France?"

"France is the theater in which the world-play is playing this year," Charley Oceaan explained. "We are characters in it. If we were not here the play would be less or different. We have some ideas about how this play should develop. All persons at all times have the right to be in France and this has always been understood. There must, in any world, be one country in which things are first attempted and tested."

The beggars became less surly after a little while. They were loosened up by the other beer and other wine, by the bread with live honey, by the big roast joints. But there was still some complaint.

"You yourselves are drinking one sort of wine and you are giving us a different sort," the second beggar complained.

"That is true," said Charley Oceaan, "and that is the way it will remain. I had received certain bottles, sent to me by unusual courier from Count Cyril himself. They are for myself and for the other members, and they are to celebrate the forming of the company. I suppose they are excellent: they are, at any rate, better than any I have ever had before. But they are a gift that cannot be translated. We are the receivers, not the givers, of this excellent wine. What we give you is good, but we are not counts."

"I have heard of this Count Cyril," the third beggar said. "I knew a man, a man of the people and of blood, who would turn aside

and spit green at the mention of his name. A curse on all who drink his wine!"

The wine from the Count Cyril was not all that extraordinary. It was good only in the way that all unspoiled wine is good. It was an ordinary yellow wine, though Dana called it golden. It was a commercial wine, and the purveyor had marked on the bottles that it was sacramental wine. The only one of them who knew (with his jumbled wealth of useless information) that the purveyor of the wine had been out of business for three hundred years was Kemper Gruenland. Kemper (and this was unusual for him) did not immediately blurt out this information. (An ordinary wine will not usually keep well for more than three hundred years.)

But it did really become a roaring and a royal feast, especially after the beggars went and brought their women in for it. There was also found for the feast a piper who made music almost as raunchy as that of the horn-piper at Jane Blaye's at Hendaye.

And in the morning, the Select Company started for Paris. This was Dana and his three grenadiers, Tancredi and Kemper and Charley Oceaen, and Mariella.

"We will go by railway," Charley Oceaen said. "It is a disgrace that Mariella has never ridden on the railway. As a common thing it is half as old as she is, and in a very few years it will reach to every corner of France. I am not sure of you others either, whether you have truly enjoyed this thing or whether you lie."

"I have ridden on a railway car in my native Sardinia," Tancredi stated.

"That cannot be," Charley protested. "There are not, as yet, any railways in Sardinia."

"But there is one. It is in an open-faced mine there, and I rode once on one of its cars, atop the diggings."

"A real railway train pulled by a steam engine?" Charley asked unbelieving.

"No. The cars were pulled by mules. But it ran on rails, hardwood timbers with iron strips on their tops, and the cars had flanged wheels for them. That is what it is to be a railway."

"And I rode a railway in my own state, one of the lesser Germanies, and I will not tell you which," Kemper maintained.

"That is barely possible," Charley admitted. "There are several short lines in the Germanies."

"I myself ride them constantly," Dana said. "But I believe that you, Charley, never have."

"That is true; you have caught me out. But I will ride this time,

now, today, if (I have not checked it yet) a train runs today to Paris. The Count would want us to ride this way at least once."

They checked. The train did run that very morning to Paris. They loaded on it and they rode. This was luxury, though a dusty and grimy sort of luxury. Each coach was of the size and shape of a ten-team coach such as runs along the roads, and there were half a dozen of these following each other in a row which was called a train. Now they were personages, people of importance. Poor people did not yet ride on the railways.

"There has been a great mistake made," Mariella said when they had ridden in their new luxury for four hours. "I believe that this railway train does not go by way of Montrouge. Let us tell the driver that he must put it onto other rails that will go to Montrouge."

"Why would anybody want to go to Montrouge?" Kemper asked.

"That is where is Dana's wife," Mariella said. "She is not exactly in Paris on this day. She is in Montrouge."

"Dana doesn't have any wife," Charley reminded them. "But I suppose we could go into Paris on the railway and then walk out or somehow ride out to Montrouge. It can't be more than twelve miles."

"Well, I suppose that we can tell the driver of this machine to put it on other rails immediately. I will do that."

"There aren't any rails that go to Montrouge, Mariella," Charley told her.

"Then we will make the driver stop this machine right now, and we will walk to Montrouge."

"That seems foolish, Mariella," Kemper said.

"It is not at all foolish," Tancredi opposed him. "My wife is never foolish. It is good that we make them stop this right now and get off it. I have a premonition that this train will be exploded and very many people killed. All Sardinians have premonitions like that from time to time."

"I have discovered that Sardinian premonitions are almost always wrong," Kemper said.

"Almost always. Not quite always," Tancredi admitted.

"We will make the driver stop this machine right now, and we will get off and walk to Montrouge," Dana stated. "We must trust Mariella in her intuitions. We must even trust Tancredi a little bit in his premonitions."

They made the driver stop the railroad train. He objected strongly. There was not a scheduled stop here, he said. He had to be threatened with sharp knives and with pistols before he stopped it, and all the trainmen were surly at being made to stop.

The Select Company got off the train and walked to Montrouge. It was only twenty miles, off to the west.

The railway train itself exploded in Alfortville and very many people, more than twenty, were killed. Men of a certain revolutionary sort had put explosives on the train and fused them to explode in the middle of Paris, but they had exploded sooner.

It was late in the afternoon when they came into Montrouge. Charley Oceaan believed that they should either take rooms at a public place at once, or find out if there was an evening coach going on in to Paris, or—

“—or pick out a wife quickly, Dana, one that will satisfy Mariella, and then we will find out a priest, and have it done and then consummated. What do you think of that little prairie chicken there, Dana? What do you think of her, Mariella? Will she not do nicely?”

“No. There is only one who will do for Dana.”

“Do you know her name or her appearance or where she is to be found?” Kemper asked.

“No. I do not know her appearance, and I have forgotten her name. Should I remember a name forever? I almost know where she is to be found. We will go down this street here, and then we will take another street. Then I think that we will be almost there.”

They went down that street; they took another street; they took a third. They came to a small cafe section. They came to one cafe that affected an English look, that had almost the appearance of an English tea-room.

“We go in here,” Mariella said. And they all went in. The place was nearly filled. Some of the people did have an English look to them, and some of them were really drinking tea.

“Oh, it is Dana my love!” came a loud and pleasant voice. “It is Dana himself, and his company of bugs. Dana my love, come here.”

It was a largish hearty girl, and she patted her woolen knees. It was, in fact, the girl named Elaine Kingsberry, one of the English ladies who had been in Jane Blaye's place in Hendaye, and who had also been in the more modish place there. And with her was the other English lady who had been in the same places.

Dana went and sat on Elaine's woolen knees and kissed her soundly for old acquaintance. She had been a fine girl, but almost mysterious in some of the things she had hinted at.

“There is something else behind the surface,” Charley Oceaan said. “Dana remembers her. I remember her a little. But how could Mariella possibly know about her? How could she have brought us

here so directly? She is the one, is she not, Mariella?"

"Oh, no, no, no," Mariella mumbled.

"Come you all over, the Dana company!" Elaine Kingsberry called loudly. "We will make them move tables together and have room for all of you. Oh come come, friends of Dana are also our friends forever."

"Oh, no, no, no," Mariella mumbled. "He has the wrong girl." But she went over to the tables with the rest of them.

"This great long man is Tancredi Cima, Elaine," Dana said.

"*Incantevol*," said Tancredi, for he was the dark gallant with the ladies.

"And this huge fair-head is Kemper Gruenland."

"I saw him at Hendaye," Elaine said, "he did not see me."

"This black man with the green heart is Charley Oceaan," Dana announced.

"I also saw him at Hendaye," Elaine bowed.

"And he did see you," Charley offered.

"And this mother goose of all of us is Mariella Cima," Dana introduced.

"Oh, no, no, no," Mariella protested. "Dana, you have the wrong girl."

"I think so too," the other English lady said.

"Are you all going into Paris?" the slightly flamboyant Elaine asked. "We came out but the day before yesterday, and we are going in again tomorrow. We will all travel together and become the finest of friends. Then I must go back to England very soon, but Catherine will be staying here."

"Oh Dana, Dana, you have the wrong girl," Mariella still protested. "Go sit on the other one's knees."

"Yes, do, Dana!" Elaine cried. "She loves things like that." And Dana rather hesitantly slid onto the knees of the other English lady.

"I haven't even introduced my best friend," Elaine said. "Everybody, this is Catherine Dembinska."

IX

OH, THE STEEP ROOFS OF PARIS

"Oh, Elaine is my cloak, she is my shield, she is my disguise," Catherine Dembinska was saying. "Who would ever notice me when she is around? Now she is going back to England again, before the fun starts really. Then I will have lost my shield, and perhaps then somebody will look at me and do away with me."

You could not say that Catherine Dembinska was pinkish. There is no word anywhere for her coloration, unless it is an obscure word in Polish, to be applied only to certain Polish persons. Certainly you could not call Catherine ruddy. Ruddy implies something coarse-grained, and Catherine was fine. She was fair, and something more highly colored than the fair. She had a deep grin, and eyes that danced like swamp-fire on St. John's Eve.

"A vile townsman of my own has seen us twice, at two different times and places," Catherine was telling. "He looked at us very intently. No, he did not: he looked at Elaine very intently. He actually gaped, and he seemed to be trying to remember something. What he was trying to remember was something he had seen in the corner of his eye—me. After all, one of the things he has on his list to do is to kill me. But the very looks of Elaine overpowered him both times. Is she not striking? Is she not elegant?"

Yes, Elaine Kingsberry was rather striking. She was showy, and she was almost elegant. She was of an infectious good humor, she was of a merry voice, and she was pretty. But whyever should she draw eyes away from Catherine Dembinska?

Elaine was a largish hearty girl, true. But Catherine was no smaller, and was no less hearty—though, perhaps, a little slower of outburst. Catherine had a deeper grin than Elaine, and more roguish eyes; and Elaine's was deep, and they were roguish. Catherine was much prettier than the pretty Elaine. She may even have been beautiful: this is hard to say. Catherine may have been a little thicker, and she was at least as tall. She had all the poised power that only a prodigy can have.

An old man on a mountain had once said that this Catherine was of startling intelligence, of a tomorrowish program, of a green-growing intuition, and of a corona-like flaming personality. Catherine herself had written that she was the only complete adept at the dogma of the Green Revolution. And she had also written that she would teach Dana, that she would use him, and that she would marry him. And this Catherine had also been distantly-known and foreknown by Mariella Cima: there is no higher recommendation than that.

"Oh yes, I have been a sort of foil to Catherine," Elaine said, "but I only shine with her light and life. When she is not present, I simply do not attract. I believe that it is the way she positions me. It is worth it. I am never so alive as when I am with her."

"Mariella Cima will be my shield and my disguise now," Catherine Dembinska said. "Who will notice me when Mariella is in the company? And there will be many times when I have to go unnoticed. Mariella is larger than life, and more beautiful. Why have men not noticed this? There is nothing like her at all on the world. You are as beautiful as Donzelle Moeras is ugly, Mariella, and the two of you are about of the same size. Is that possible? Could anyone else be of the size of either of you?"

"Who is this Donzelle Moeras?" Mariella asked. "I have only a very slight foreknowledge of her. I do not like her. Should I?"

"No, you should not like her, Mariella," Catherine said with passion, "not if you are the wonderful person I believe you to be. Nor should you love her either, not even in the compulsory Christian way. I tell you do not love her at all unless God specifically orders you to. Better yet, let Him give you the order three times. Still better yet, let Him put it in writing. Even in that final case, Mariella, love her grudgingly. She is the complete opposite of you, and her group is the complete opposite of yours, of ours."

"Then would I not become a great actress lady if I could become this Donzelle Moeras?" Mariella asked slyly. She was sparkling her eyes with delight at the new idea.

"Stand back," Dana cried. "Mariella has a new notion, and the neighborhood is not safe for man nor mule."

"What, my girl?" Tancredi asked, "do you intend to make our name an abomination in Paris before we even come there?"

"It will be a very dangerous game and I'm not sure you understand what you are about," said Kemper. "It isn't a thought-out thing at all. I have heard of these persons."

"When in doubt, let the bugle blow Charge," Charley Ocean cried. "All the way, Mariella, up the hill to the barricades."

"I am never in doubt," Mariella said. "But yes, sound the Charge."

"I am never in doubt when I am with you, Mariella." Catherine also began to come alive on the idea.

"I will do it, and at once," Mariella was smiling in a way to curdle the strongest blood. "Charley Ocean, see if you can hire an immediate night coach to take us all into Paris. Tancredi and Kemper, go with Elaine to get the things of both the ladies out of their hotel. Catherine, I can see the whole of the establishment of this Donzelle, inside and out. I can see the faces of all the villains who live with her there. I understand how such a thieves' establishment works. I grew up in one: it was like this one in sum, but different from it in every detail. I can see it all, but I do not know the name of the section or the street."

"It is the Sainte Marguerite district, it is in the Rue Montreuil," Catherine Dembinska said. "It is a lower respectable district, not a thieves' district."

"Oh, we always kept a respectable appearing cave and buildings when we were in the robbing and murdering business," Mariella said. Charley Ocean had already gone out to see about hiring a night coach to take them to Paris, and Tancredi and Kemper had gone with Elaine Kingsberry to get the ladies' baggage from their hotel.

"Oh, all the pieces will fly apart just as they should when the time comes," Mariella beamed. "I believe that for every one of those rotters there is a counterpart in our own company. We will move in on them and eject them. And we will let them howl in the streets over the thing."

"Will I have a counterpart among them?" Dana asked. "Will he be too salty for me to eject? I have heard about them and him. He is pretty salty."

"Catherine," Mariella said suddenly. "You are a schoolteacher on fire."

"I am, yes, and I burn a little now. Listen, all you people—" (but their company had now been reduced to the three of them)—"to restrict an analogy may be a sin. I tell you that there are things in the world even beyond the ends of our noses. The long-nosed devils will not believe this. They will extend their noses to reach further things, and they will extend them again, but they cannot extend them forever."

"Listen, all you people, the green-growing world is not restricted to its vegetation. There is a green-growing God above, there are green-growing people on the earth, and plants and rocks and ores and machineries, and graces and dedications and ideas and arts. There are green-growing prayers arising. But the devils

in Hell are not green-growing, and those on Earth are not.

"Listen, all you people—"

"Why do you say 'All you people' when there is only you and me and Dana present?" Mariella asked her.

"I give lectures sometimes," Catherine explained. "I want to talk to many people, to all the people. Perhaps some needy one will overhear me accidentally. I even say 'Listen, all you people' when I talk to birds in the parks or to cats sunning themselves in windows. Listen, all you people: no, I am not a pantheist, not even a green one. To be that is to confuse the bridge with the ultimate shore. It is to confuse the pot with the potter. But I am a living pot; I am a green vessel of earth; I am the perfume of a *full* vase.

"Beware of those who manufacture final answers as they go along, of those who will catch you on their catch-phrases and let you perish in their traps. *All the final answers were given in the beginning.* They stand shining, above and beyond us, but they are always there to be seen. They may be too bright for us, they may be too clear for us. Well then, we must clarify our own eyes. Our task is to grow out until we reach them.

"We ourselves become the bridges out over the interval that is the world and time. It is a daring thing to fling ourselves out over that void that is black and scarlet below and green and gold above and beyond. And we must be rooted deeply. A bridge does not abandon its first shore when it grows out in spans towards the further one."

Dana was whistling *Mountain Bridges*, one of the raunchy tune-dance-games that the horn-piper had played in Jane Blaye's place in Hendaye.

"I remember the tune and the game," Catherine Dembinska smiled. "I heard it and watched it from the roadway outside. Well, we must be such strong bridges that even elephants could cross over on us if there was reason for it.

"In this growing out there are no really new things or new situations. There are only things growing out right, or things growing out deformed and shriveled. There is nothing new about railways or foundries or lathes or steel furnaces. They also are green-growing things. There is nothing new about organizations of men or of money. All these growing things are good, if they grow towards the final answers that were given in the beginning. But in their medium growth they must not be rigid. It is not a girder-steel bridge we make; it is a living liana-vine bridge that we grow and fling out in exaltations of arches. Only the final things are beyond change, being beyond time: but rigidity is too small a word for them. All grows well for a while, you see, and then—

“—the devils stroll the earth again and infect with the red sickness. They must, at all cost to themselves, destroy the growing tendrils before such can touch the other side. For, whenever one least growing creeper touches across the interval, that means the extinction of one devil. It is a thing to be tested. Notice it that whenever there is this special shrilling, when there is the wild flinging out of catchwords to catch you in, when there are the weird exceptions and inclusions, when there are the specious arguments and the murderous defamations, when all the volubility of the Voltaire and the cuteness of the queers has been assembled to confound you, then one green growth has almost reached across to the other side, one devil is in danger of extinction. Oh, they will defend against that!”

Catherine Dembinska had actually lectured Dana and Mariella at much greater length than that. “Yes, you are the schoolteacher on fire,” Mariella said.

“Come along!” Elaine Kingsberry was calling from the doorway. “Charley Ocean has the night coach ready. All the luggage is loaded. There is a frolic waiting for you, but it is too un-English a thing for me. I will miss it; still I will go home tomorrow. Dana, you have lingered in your wife’s lap long enough there. Drag the two of them out by the ears, Mariella, and let us be gone. You can hear the horses stamp their impatience.”

They went to Paris in a rented night coach. They unloaded Elaine Kingsberry at a hotel that catered to the English trade. They went on then to the Sainte Marguerite district, to the street named Montreuil, to a large dark house that Mariella pointed out. They unloaded such things as they had in the small snow of the road. Only Catherine had much baggage. It was Catherine who paid the two men of the night coach, then the nightcoach had driven away.

Catherine and Dana and Tancredi and Kemper and Charley Ocean followed the indomitable Mariella up the rather sinister broken-stone steps to the darkened house. Already a small night-audience had gathered in the street. The people of the district had some fear of the house and its inhabitants, and what seemed to be an attack would be interesting. There were partisans: the old house people, the new people people.

“They will shoot your heads off quickly,” a small nervous man said. “Why should they not? Who are you to be challenging houses?”

Mariella Cima knocked loudly on the heavy outer door three times. Then she counted. “One, two, three, time enough for

honest persons to open." She breasted into the door powerfully and it opened with some splintering of frame and panel. It had been heavily barred, but the mortise bits into which the bars slid were old.

The small front hall gave directly on a stairway, and a large woman was at the top of this stairs. She held a lamp in one hand, and in the other was a shotgun which she handled like a pistol. But her voice was all sweet and strong as wild honey.

"I have no rooms to let. The house is entirely occupied. You were misinformed to come here for any reason. I see there has been an accident with the door. I will have my men fix it at once. There are good rooms to be found in the district west of here, a dozen squares west. Good night to you."

As big as Mariella, and with a shotgun which she handled like a pistol.

"Who is it in my own house that tells me there is no room?" Mariella shouted boldly. "What do you here, big woman? Be gone at once. Who are you?"

"What? What? What? I am Donzelle Moeras, the lady of this house. Are you insane? The police are friends of mine. Get out now, or there will be violence done to you."

"You are Donzelle Moeras?" Mariella howled, "I am Donzelle Moeras! This is *my* house. We return here from a gentle evening and we find our house occupied by a crazy woman. Out, out now, or we will have them come and take you to the crazy woman house."

"I am Donzelle!" Donzelle cried in anger, "the biggest woman in the whole Sainte Marguerite."

"I am Donzelle!" Mariella Cima cried in savage glee, "the biggest woman in the whole Sainte Marguerite."

It was close. Nobody could really say which was the biggest woman. They were almost of the same tremendous and shapely form. Catherine Dembinska had been mistaken when she said that Mariella was as beautiful as Donzelle Moeras was ugly. Donzelle was in no way ugly. She had once been an absolute sensation and had commanded the highest prices in town, higher even than had certain ladies of the nobility. She still had her wonderful looks, and she was dressed, even surprised in the middle of the night, finer than Mariella (or even Catherine) had ever dressed in her life. But twelve years had gone by since she had been the absolute sensation. She had given up much of her carnality; she had experienced a great religious conversion such as is often experienced by French women of the torrid sort; but she had been converted, not to the religion of Christ and Mary and

the Saints, but to the religion of Babouvistic Communism. Worry and hatred and intensity had etched the Donzelle face somewhat, but it was still imposing, and it was not really ugly.

And what gave Donzelle her incredible stateliness (this was important in her current face-down with Mariella) was more than anything the red carpet. This ran from the little entrance place up the thirteen steps of the stairway, and across the upper landing where Donzelle stood. This was royal red in the light of Donzelle's upheld lamp. It was a rich, rapacious red; it was imperious, it was an overbearing red, it was the red of the superbious assumption.

"I will have to do something about that red carpet," Mariella Cima said out loud. Mariella could not win the face-down against both Donzelle and the red carpet.

Mariella bent, and tore upward with the edge of that red carpet where it ended in the entry-way. She rolled it and got it firmly in her strong hands. But the red rich thing went up thirteen risers of steps and seemed to be tightly nailed or stapled or cemented. Moreover, it was anchored, on the top landing, by the magnificent weight of Donzelle Moeras which was not less than one sixth of a long ton.

Mariella lunged with the end of the red carpet. She lunged with the impact of a double team of mountain mules. And the whole thing came in a pyrotechnic moment to be remembered. There was the brazen clangor of Donzelle (like a whole towerful of outraged bells) as that tremendous lady was upside down in the terrified air somewhere above the stairway; there was the double blast of her shotgun which roared and rattled like a loose bull; there was the crash and then the explosion of her flung lamp, and the fire immediately cascading upward. There was the resounding crash of Donzelle herself, and then her being rolled up in the red carpet by the energetic Mariella.

"Carry it out!" Mariella ordered in a ringing voice, and Tancredi and Kemper carried the huge bundle into the street, then flicked it aroll, and the unfortunate Donzelle Moeras came to rest clear across the street, at the end of the smoking carpet, disheveled in the light snow. Donzelle bawled out in invective and defiance, but she had lost dignity, and she was defeated for the while.

"Should we not put out the fire?" Dana asked rather reasonably.

"No. I love it," Mariella said. "Let it burn a little while. Then we will put it out."

"The whole house will go quickly," Charley Oceaan said. "If we intend to use the house—"

"Of course we intend to use it," Mariella said. "All right. Put out the fire. I love it, though. I wish people didn't always have to put

out the fires so quickly."

They put out the fire, with much carrying of pails of water and tubs of water, with a great thwacking of wet sacks. People of the street and neighborhood helped them. The people accepted the victory and the new mistress of the house.

But the entry of the house had a rakish and disreputable look now.

"We will leave it like that," Mariella said. "It will be our mark and our signature. And now we will set another signature. Kemper, go get a green carpet."

"What? A green carpet?" the big man gaped it out.

"Kemper!" Catherine Dembinska remonstrated, "a good member of our company does not hesitate and ask questions when he receives an order from Dana or from Mariella or from — ah — myself. Go at once and get a green carpet, a rich green carpet of the size of the old angry red one, one with the sheen and the glory on it. It must cover the entry floor and the thirteen steps and the landing floor above. See that it is wide and deep. If, as it may happen, the shops are closed at this hour, find the owners and force them to open; or open the shops yourself. If you hesitate over a small order, how will you respond to the larger situations?"

Kemper Gruenland gulped (with the sound such as a large bull-frog might make), shrugged his mountainous shoulders (that in itself was an event) and went to get the green carpet. There is something which may have been overlooked in this bulky and towering Germanish giant, this man who had done necessary and bloody work in Sardinia for several years, who had his heart full of scrappy poetry about the Maid Helen and his head full of incredibly detailed and often erroneous information, this man who prowled the world on genuine quest: this big man was bashful. He was terrified of hunting out and waking shopkeepers in the middle of the night. He was more than terrified of having to explain his mission of obtaining a great rich green carpet, not in the morning, not at a rational time, but right now. But it is to his credit that he did it.

He returned in an hour, a giant with a giant bundle, and with four lesser men hanging onto the edges of it and dragging their feet in protest of the carpet rape. The four small men were making quite a large noise. Catherine Dembinska gave them additional money to quiet them. Carpets of that size and quality were quite expensive, and the men had not been, as Kemper believed they had, trying to over-charge him.

They laid the new carpet over the entry and up the stairs and onto the upper landing. It was a rich green river. Charley Ocean

had meanwhile obtained a ship's lamp and hung it in the ceiling of that upper landing. He had also brought a barrel of lamp oil there, and he announced that the lamp would burn forever, day and night.

They had moved all their possessions in. They were at home in their new house, and while they were in the house they would go by the names of the previous occupants. It was almost morning. It was almost time for a big first breakfast. Indeed, Catherine Dembinska and Kemper Gruenland had already gone out to bring provender and viands into the house.

It was almost time for the first challenge, no—for the second challenge: the challenge of Mariella Cima to Donzelle Moeras had been the first. Now each new member of the house must face challenge, must oust his counterpart.

"By such a sudden take-over we may reap an unexpected harvest," Catherine Dembinska said. "By this, we may make contact with all sorts of unusual individuals that we wouldn't be able to locate otherwise."

"So said the barefoot man when he leapt into the snake pit," Charley Oceaan had muttered. "There should be pleasure and excitement enough for all."

Mariella really should have been a general. She had captured an enemy division headquarters in the middle of the night. But strong men armed would be returning to that headquarters. The situation was a little unusual and not entirely comic. One does not ordinarily walk into a den of cut-throats and tell them that they are being evicted. It has not been sufficiently explained just what sort of persons were Donzelle Moeras and the devils who lived in her house. The situation, in fact, defies explanation. Catherine Dembinska, from long and detailed study of the two revolutions, understood what sort of nest this was. Mariella Cima understood it intuitively. The four men had all heard of the complex, but each had his own imperfect idea of it. And the four men looked forward a little too avidly, a little too wrongly to the next stage of the take-over. Catherine felt herself required to correct them.

"There is one thing that seems inseparable from bravery in men and from bravery in Mariella," Catherine was saying. "It is embodied in a frequent saying of Dana's little brown-skinned snake, though she learned it from another and much larger snake. 'The high hilarity of blood and death' is the name of that phrase, and indeed it is a rippling and inspiring thing—but for certain critical moments only. It is not the thing that one would build a house upon, however.

"And I say that it is not inseparable from bravery in men and in Mariella, and I intend to separate it right now. If we should live by that thought, how would we differ from those of the other revolution?"

"Listen now to a series of sayings that always come hard to brave people. Our task is to extirpate by prevention. Our own great movement will grow with its own impetus wherever it is not blighted. We will break up persons of blight and centers of blight. But often, and this will be the hard part for all of you to understand, we will warn and advise before we kill. And quite often we will not kill at all. Try to understand this."

"Schoolteacher, your shirt-tail is on fire," Tancredi said with gentle mockery. But Tancredi was extremely fond of Catherine. He had taken her into his love as his wife Mariella had done.

"We will launch visitations, yes," Catherine said. "We will warn. I have no sympathy for the old Cagoulards of France or for any other masked society. We will not go masked, we will not disguise. We will be ourselves under our own names, except here in this house under the Mariella antic. We will interfere with the blight wherever it is manifest. We will judge, which is an august and frightening thing for anyone to have to do. We will prevent the blighting, but not in all cases will we have to kill to prevent it. Remember, Mariella replaced Donzelle Moeras without killing her."

"Oh Catherine, how is it possible for you to misunderstand so much?" Mariella asked. "Of course I will kill her. For a little while I leave her alive for bait, so she can squall her outrage and bring some of her old people to this place. But soon she will be worn out for bait, just as crayfish meat is soon worn out. And then I will kill her, and all the honey from Catherine's tongue will not prevent it."

"You disappoint me," Catherine said. "But it is better to have people who can do it this way than to have people who cannot do it at all. The pieces of the blight will come to us in our new house for a while, and we will deal with them. But there are more various pieces that we will have to search out. To do this we will often have to read strange minds, some of the minds not entirely human. Luckily, of the people of special talent, we have Dana, we have Mariella, we have myself. And all of us show signs of this intuitive ability."

"Show us the sign of it, curious Catherine. Who is the man who will come to this door in just three minutes, and what is to be read in his mind?"

"Oh, I don't know that at all. I don't apperceive anybody coming

right now.”

“Luckily, of the people of special talent, we have Tancredi Cima,” tall Tancredi said. “And lucky it will be for Tancredi if he comes through this one alive. That is a rough mountain goat coming, as rough as Tancredi himself, and nobody is allowed to help poor Tancredi in his ordeal.”

“You had better find one more talent in yourself, Tancredi,” Mariella said. “Yes, he is a rough mountain goat and a woolly one. I may have to throw the code away and save you from him. Or I may have to accept it gracefully. I was lonesome before I had you, Tancredi, but I will not long be lonesome after. With my looks, I will not be a widow for long.”

This was along about cloudy noon of their first full day in that house.

“I pick him up now,” Catherine said. “My own intuition begins to reach and touch. He comes easily but cautiously. He knows that his den is being taken over. He is murderous and he is mad.”

“After all, he is Tancredi's counterpart,” Dana grinned. None of them doubted that the rough mountain goat coming was Tancredi's antagonist. None of them doubted that Tancredi would have to handle him alone. And they all sensed the incursing man pretty clearly.

“Be cautioned,” big Kemper warned. “Ambush in the city is not the same as ambush in the high rocks.”

“Ambush everywhere is the same as ambush in the high rocks,” Tancredi said. “But we have been careless. We haven't yet examined our own high rocks here.”

“Oh, I have not been careless, man,” Mariella said. “I have already learned every spire and cave and cliff of them. And he will already know them: he has denned here. It may go bad with you, Tancredi, but I remember that you are a real mountain man.”

“I have lost him now,” Catherine moaned. “My intuition has dried up like an August creek. He has disappeared into the cloudy air.”

“Oh, he climbs cliffs now,” Mariella said.

“What cliffs?” Catherine was puzzled. She was not a real primitive like some others of them. After all, they were in the middle of Paris: what was all this about? What was all the talk about high rocks and mountain goats and cliffs? She should have known.

“I will be about it now,” Tancredi said. He went up through the house, up through the high attics, up through the roofs, by window or trap, then up again. Here it became private and he may not be tracked or followed.

Tancredi was a shy man. His curious whispering voice that carried so strongly and to such a distance was a shy one. He was shy in his love-making, to the infinite puzzlement of his wife Mariella. "Wait, there is a ram on the crest, wait till he goes," Tancredi would say when were in their own Carlist mountains. "The ram does his business, now you do yours," Mariella would tell him. "Wait, there is a dog of our acquaintance hunting up that draw," Tancredi would say. "Even if he sees, who would he tell it to?" Mariella had asked. "Wait," Tancredi had said, "there is an owl." A shy man.

And also in his stalking and man-conflict he was shy. What he did, he did in the secrecy of the high rocks. He always got above his man and hunted down. A very shy killer, but could he get above his man now?

From the roof, Tancredi was across to higher roofs, and still higher. How high do these steep roofs of Paris go? Very high. There is always another one above. Even where there should be no buildings below, there seem to be roofs extending up and beyond. On very cloudy days the roofs go up still higher and steeper. There is no limit to them. They melt into the clouds themselves.

Tancredi and his foe stalked each other on the high roofs of that square, and then on more distant and higher roofs. Some of the streets in the Sainte Marguerite district were narrow, and many of the roofs had great overhangs. They went higher and farther, and both of them, as it happened, were excellent mountain men. They went onto still higher roofs till they were lost in the clouds of a gathering storm.

Rain fell on them. Tempests fell on them. The tile and slate roofs became slick with rain and dangerous with wind, even for mountain men. And in the early afternoon, half a dozen squares from the house in Rue Montreuil, a tall craggy man fell out of the stormy sky to his death. He was named Louis Saussure. He was known as an instigator. He was from a region in the Savoy Mountains called the Graian Alps.

Another tall craggy man, named Tancredi Cima, returned to a house on Montreuil street half an hour later, coming out of the rainy slate-colored sky and through the steep complex of roofs. He was shaken and silent. He had been through a private passion. He had the look of a man who had been dead, and who lived again.

"This is the fulcrum, here and now," Catherine said. "It is the last small fulcrum ever from which the world may be moved. This is Paris which is the center and cerebrum of France, and also of the world. In another year, two years, three years, it will no longer be

the center of the world, but now it is. From this small fulcrum the world can really be moved. And Paris herself can be moved from an incredibly smaller fulcrum. This is the Paris of today, the Paris of the one hundred persons which can shape the world. It were good if we had encounter with all one hundred of those persons, today, tonight, tomorrow. We will deal with all of them, as soon as we can, as powerfully as we can."

Dana Coscuin and Catherine Dembinska had begun to go out in society at night. Catherine was always dressed in the high fashion for these evening excursions, and Dana had his own easy way with the high people. Though they went stylishly, however, they did not go in a carriage. They went, more gaily, less intensely than Tancredi had done, over the roof-tops. Catherine was not a true primitive like some others of them, but she was a high hoyden. She was a town girl, a girl of many towns. They have roofs in Krakow also, and in Vienna, even in London. And Catherine had been in Paris before, in her girlhood (convent schools also have steep slate roofs for night-larking), and in her youngest womanhood (Bohemians and cats live up under the roofs and often travel on the roofs, and Catherine knew both the Bohemians and the cats of Paris).

Though Dana and Catherine went out in society at night, they were not always invited out into that society. Often they came into society dinners unasked: coming in through high windows, sometimes easily, sometimes shatteringly, coming down through attics and garrets, coming by servants' stairways or doorways, coming in respectably with false names and cards. This was part of the Paris of one hundred people that could move the world, a small slice of those one hundred to be found in the evening society. Dana and Catherine talked to these people. They inculcated them.

Sometimes the inculcations were received willingly, sometimes at pistol or knife point. Catherine was no Mariella, but she did like to make her points redly and aptly, right under the chin, perhaps, but with only a small trickle to compel attention, while she might sit on a nervous gentleman's lap to give her lecture on the Green Revolution. Whether or not these people agreed with her, they listened to her for the moment, and they remembered her.

The cats and the Bohemians Catherine had known in her girlhood, but now there were new cats and new Bohemians. Many of the Paris of one hundred people were Bohemians in their lives and likings, and Dana and Catherine also visited them in the very odd hours. It was with these that the two came to have real reputations: the names of both of them were already known to

most of the select Bohemians.

But it was a pleasure to see Catherine, long-skirted, huge-hatted, gloved, go over the dangerous roofs and down the crumbling walls, serving sometimes as ladder or platform for Dana, hoisting and being hoisted, dancing schoolgirl dances on the very top roof-ridges, whooping down chimneys, even going down chimneys, hanging by her heels to jimmy window locks ninety feet in the air, entering by sash or by crash, and appearing there, immaculate and modish, a lady out of a band-box, a lady in every part of her.

Kemper Gruenland had his encounter with his own antagonist several days after Tancredi had his. Kemper's was not so private nor so passionately skulking a thing, though. Bashful as big Kemper might be in some of his ways, he did his best fighting out loud and in public.

And his antagonist, his apparent perfect counterpart, came in broad daylight with a raucous Low German roaring such as had scared the very tails off the bears in earlier times. He was as big as Kemper, as German, as brash, as callow. He had been brought to Paris by men of the other revolution as a simple-minded and powerful killer. He even looked like Kemper.

But Bright Fate will have to get her eyes fixed one of these days. Kemper and the other young giant were only apparent counterparts. This young man really was callow. Kemper only seemed so: actually he was fletched and battle-feathered and was a veteran of the deadly Sardinian attrition. Kemper had whole heads full of wild facts that this oaf lacked. Kemper had mystique, and poetry about Maid Helen.

They clashed in battle, but it wasn't an even battle. They fought in the entry of the house on the green carpet itself. Kemper had come to a sort of maturity, and it showed now in his every move. In spite of the demolishing way that Dana Coscuin had handled him some days before, Kemper had become almost unbeatable. None but a lightning-like man could have touched him at all, and his present antagonist wasn't that. They had fought with short knives, and Kemper had sent both the knives clattering away; but the opponent was slashed and skewered much the worst in the exchange. They had fought with pistols in a close grappling go of it. Kemper was shot in the trapezius muscles, that are off the back of the neck, but he was like a bull or buffalo there and the pistol ball hardly made him stagger. He shot the opponent in the left thigh muscle, and also in the left foot, and the opponent (already slower than Kemper) became quite slow now. They used the

pistols for clubs then, and used them savagely. But it was the pistol of the opponent that came apart first. Kemper's horn-handled pistol was well-made, and the bosses on it made it like a spiked club. It did real damage.

And then Kemper handled his torn-up hulk of an opponent bare-handed and clog-footed, knocking the man's legs out, bowling him over again and again, and out the front door and down the front stairs, rolling him like a barrel, like a hoop; leaving him then in the dirty runnels of the street. The wreck stayed there for several hours, until men came and loaded him on a cart and hauled him away.

There would be no sworn vengeance to that one. The battered nameless giant had had enough of Paris forever. He would go back to the Germanies as soon as he was able to travel. And Kemper was now a street hero, for the showy parts of the fight had taken place out of doors and in the street.

The counterpart of Charley Ocean came along four days later. He had been doing devils' work in Le Havre. They were not really close counterparts. This opponent was merely man-sized, as Charley was; he was clearly a seaman, as Charley was; he was brown, not black; he was from somewhere in North Africa, not from the Western Islands; he also had the puzzling aspect of one either completely simple or completely sophisticate. But, like all the ones homing in on the house, he understood the nature of the intrusion, of the dynasty-change there, at once.

He was older than Charley Ocean and more devious. His name was Asad de Mogador. He was quite young in his movements, but a little weary in the face. This may have been a tiredness of spirit, or it may have been from the long hours of travel. Very many persons, most of them in some way noteworthy, were now assembling in Paris from everywhere; or they were called back to Paris which had already been the headquarters of their work. A big show was showing in Paris and the name of it was The Eve of the Revolution.

"The eagles are gathering," Tancredi Cima had said in his smouldering Sardinian way.

"No. The hyenas are gathering," Catherine Dembinska had said.

Asad de Mogador was neither eagle nor hyena but he was of the mixed floating nation now called to closer work in its capital. He was a lion, a panther, a pard; a big cat anyhow, a sea-going cat. So was Charley Ocean.

Asad also had found something wrong with his own little world, the north-west African coast, and had ascribed it to

something wrong with the bigger world, the world which had now begun both to interfere and to rule on that coast. Asad had come to make personal changes in the bigger world. He didn't care what his effect on the bigger world would be, only that it should weaken that hand on his own coast. Asad was a fetishistic man and he had accepted the Red Revolution as a fetish. He also had found that the bigger world had a small swivel base: Paris.

Asad came into Montreuil street and called to a boy there. He gave several things into the boy's hand: a piece of shell-fish, a small strip of sail cloth with something painted or written on it, a split iron ring, a longer thing which may have been a whistle, another small thing. Asad was a fetish man, and so to an extent was Charley Ocean in spite of his having accepted the Faith. Asad told the boy to bring the things to the black man who was in the house there. These things formed a sort of code of challenge. Charley Ocean understood them, and he came into the frame of the open front door.

There was the silent war of the eyes and the stance, and surprisingly it was Asad who wilted at this. He became quite angry and agitated at that intangible defeat.

"Fight, pup, fight!" Asad called to Charley, "but don't look at me with those eyes." The second part of that call seemed to have come involuntarily from Asad and to add to his fury. Charley Ocean came down one step, and Asad went up three.

Charley rolled a pearl-handled pistol out with motionless motion, and Asad slapped it away from him with so resounding a blow that it is not certain whether the pistol itself fired. The quick unbelievable blow numbed Charley's whole arm. Asad was in that moment shown as the swifter and stronger of them; and at that same moment there was a sudden welling up of fear on those steps.

There was a twist to the event, though. In which of them did the fear well up?

"Man, don't look at me with those eyes," Asad gave Charley a fearful warning.

With the same rolling rapid motions they were both out with long knives, half-swords really. They parried swiftly and rattlingly; they bit and bit back with their blades. The knives glinted silver in the sun, and then glinted red-silver, though the play was really too fast for the eye. The knives scurried and scissored together with the sound that is made only when the lubrication between them is graphite or blood. And Charley Ocean was the more bloodied of the two men. But Asad was the more disturbed.

"Oh man, oh *fantôme*, do not look at me with those eyes," Asad begged.

Asad was the faster. He had already made a bloody mess of Charley Oceaan. Asad was the stronger. Charley's wrists were weak with the fire-weariness of merely parrying the strong knife blows. Asad was the more enduring. Charley was already stumbling tired, and with an ashy-gray clouded look on him from the blood loss. But it was Asad who was unaccountably nervous.

"Man, don't look at me, don't look at me like that," he whimpered.

Asad had Charley Oceaan down and it was only a question whether Charley's wrists or his throat would be hacked to pieces first. Everything had gone against Charley, except that twisted quirk in Asad.

"Man, don't look at me with those eyes, don't look at me at all, ever," this Asad de Mogador moaned, and he rolled his own eyes in an extraordinary manner.

Failing immediately to close Charley's eyes in death, crazily fearing that even in death Charley's eyes would remain open and staring at him, Asad suddenly gave it all up. He wrenched himself away, he stumbled and fell down the steps, he rolled in the street, he rose and ran. He went and threw himself in the Seine, so a boy who had followed him reported. He was a fetishistic man.

Asad did not drown, however. He was pulled out of the river by workmen. And he was around Paris all that winter and spring and summer, working for the other revolution. But in all that time he would avoid Charley Oceaan with horror. He would stay as far out of Charley's way as he could.

Those of the select company would now refer to Charley Oceaan as The Man with the Spooky Eyes, and there had always been something odd about his eyes. The new thing in them now was merely dull agony, though. Charley was badly cut up, almost mortally so.

Paris of the One Hundred Persons, it was the pivot and future of the world. But an examination of the one hundred persons is a little disappointing. They are rather straining and confused little men. Not really a great one in the lot.

Frederic Ozanam who instituted the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, Abel Davaud a young bronze worker, Paul de Flotte a revolutionary theorist, Karl Marx who was another, Monsignor Affre who was Archbishop of Paris, Louis Blanc with his dream of networks of cooperatives, Philippe Buchez whose history of the French Revolution had now reached forty-six volumes (many

poor workmen had read all forty-six volumes of it), Odilon Barrot, Napoleon Chancel, Ledru-Rollin who has been called the boneheaded demagog, Lamartine the scrivener, Flocon the turncoat (he became a moderate), Agricol Perdiguiet with his attempts to reform the *Compagnonnages*, the artisan-guilds, Etienne Cabet who invented Cabetian Communism and the Icarian Commonwealth, Ifreann Chortovitch the young revolutionary from Krakow, Victor Schoelcher who slipped through the decree ending slavery in the French colonies.

Not a great man in the lot—hardly a one, except Ozanam, of whom one could say unhesitatingly ‘He was a good man’—none of them men of real intelligence. There were ten thousand Frenchmen of real intelligence (it was a century of genius) but none of them won places in the Paris of the One Hundred Persons.

What were these then who happened to be fashioning the future and with no license for it? They were whistles, whistles with various winds blowing through them.

The hundred persons of earth-fulcrum Paris were not all discrete individual human persons. Some of them were hasty journals or newspapers, some of them were clubs or leagues, some of them were secret societies. But they were whistles, every one of them, and they gave their own sound to the prevailing winds. Perhaps three score and ten further men and institutions (other than those whose names we mumble) made up the circle and century of influence, but they were none of them prodigies, they were none of them of full talent; one half of them were hardly competent. They were rhythms, they were drum-beats, they were pulses.

Dana Coscuin's own opponent and counterpart approached about a week after that of Charley Ocean.

“But he is no counterpart at all of me,” Dana said. “This mystic thing breaks down into a mish-mash. I am not so squarish a man as that—” (but Dana was just about as squarish a man) “—I am not nearly so old a man—” (but Dana was quite nearly as old; it was the black beard that made the antagonist seem older) “—I am sure that I have much more fire in me—” (but the Carbonarist who was the opponent was full of his own enclosed fire, as were all who belonged to the society of the Charcoal-Burners) “—I, at least, am faithful, and he is as treacherous as his namesake.” (But Dana had been unfaithful to his own basis several times, and the antagonist kept forever a burning faith in his own creed.)

The antagonist came and stood in the street before the house, rather surly, rather bashful. He kicked his toe in the dust and

waited for Dana Coscuin to come out.

He was Jude Revanche, the squarish bearded man who had cursed Dana in the roadway at Hendaye, who had said that he would burn down the Carlist Hills, who had gone off with Kemper Gruenland on the long east road towards the Mediterranean and towards Cagliari in Sardinia. (Wait, wait, that part has not been sufficiently explained.)

Jude was the greatest cut-throat in the world, and now there was a new and sinister change in him (of the left, of the left eye particularly).

"He is now a *caochan*, a one-eyed creature of the Devil," Dana said, "and an honest man cannot escape, without craftiness and tall trickery, the knife of a *caochan*. It was always so in Ireland."

Dana took strips of leather from which Mariella made bridles and reins: bridle-making was a mountain trade that she still followed. Dana also took finished and near-finished bridles that already had their iron bit-pieces. He wrapped these strips with their iron around his throat tightly, and over them he wrapped a fine green scarf that Catherine Dembinska had given him. An *iarann-scornach*, an iron-throat can sometimes escape the blade of a Devil's one-eye.

Dana went out into the street to meet the *caochan*.

"Straw-hair, I will have all the blood out of you and sell it for pigs' blood," Jude Revanche the *caochan* said.

"You make the wrong move, square man, and I will have the beard off your face and the eyes out of your head," Dana said in the pleasant fashion he had used for the words once before. And he scored Revanche deeply in the cheek with his hand knife.

"One of my eyes is already gone," Revanche said conversationally, "to your fair giant friend in the house there. He took it from me in Sardinia. It marked the end of our friendship. I will go in and kill him as soon as I have killed you." And Revanche struck his knife to Dana's throat in a blow too rapid to be measured in time. Jude was faster of hand than Dana. "What say you now, straw-hair, what say you now?" Revanche taunted.

And Dana was completely unable to answer. Whether his throat had been severed through the leather and iron he did not know, but the very force of the blow had numbed his voice. Then he sliced Revanche severely on the square jowls.

Revanche struck again. This blow certainly went through wound leather and even through wrought iron and brought Dana's blood in a growing smear on the green scarf.

Dana struck back, and the battle was over with. He had Revanche's right eye out of his head and dangling on his cheek,

and the cut-throat was blind.

"End it, straw-hair, end it," Revanche said stolidly.

"I leave you," Dana said with a mere whisper of his returning voice.

Revanche's face contorted at the news that he would not die. He went off crying, weeping blood and tears. "What I was born to do, I cannot do now."

All the antagonists, all the supplanted and unhoused ones, had returned to the house and to battle except the counterpart of Catherine Dembinska.

"How could Catherine have a counterpart?" Dana asked.

"My counterpart is not at all what you would imagine," Catherine said.

Some time after this, it was late afternoon of February 20, Sunday, of the year 1848, there was a hearty booming that echoed up and down Montreuil Street, there was a striding mountain of royal purple hue, there were remembered words that were outrageously sounding in the real world:

"It is I and thou, Dana, and the wonderful blood in the gutters!" The afternoon sun went under a cloud, but hearts leapt up contrarily. Ifreann Chortovitch the Son of the Devil had finally appeared on their scene.

X

DEVIL UNDER THE TABLE

"Dana, Dana, that we may become close friends in the short years before I devour you," Ifreann gloated his pleasure at the meeting. He was the most fearsome and at the same time the most pleasantly hearty man any of them had ever encountered. He had poured himself up those front steps like a fruity flood.

"You cannot come into this house, Ifreann—if you are Ifreann," Dana said sharply. But Dana was a pygmy beside this much solider giant than Kemper. Besides, he was taken with an unaccountable liking for the big man. A monstrous liking really.

"Of course I will come into this house. I own this house," Ifreann said. "As well tell a river that it cannot come into its own banks. There has been some supplanting here, I know, but I am sure it has been of a good-humored sort. My large and sensational mistress was rolled down the stairway and out into the street. I forgive that, though she hasn't forgiven it yet. Are you sure that you can take her in dishonest combat, Mariella? Any person may have the rug pulled from under his feet.

"Tancredi caused a tall Savoyard of my employ to fall from a slick roof to his death. I forgive that. A Savoyard who can fall under any conditions is not such a one as I want to keep. Kemper has chased a German hulk back to the Germanies, and I forgive that. German hulks are easy to come by.

"Oceaan has spooked the Lion of Mogador, and I also forgive that. I myself must frequently spook this Asad to keep him in line. Which of us has the spookiest eyes, Oceaan? Is it possible that I have found an equal or master in you?

"Dana has blinded Jude Revanche, and this I do not entirely forgive, Dana. It is counted against your blood and against your life. But that I should be unwelcomed in my own house, this I could not forgive at all. Let it not happen!"

"You are in the house. You are not in our love," Mariella said.

"I don't deal in that commodity," Ifreann told her. "But I do deal in bodies. I wonder if you will be as enjoyable as the sensational

Donzelle, Mariella. Ah, the swollen red-black anger look of Tancredi, the only high scenery of Sardinia that can be exported. I collect such looks as I collect other glories. If looks could kill, I would long ago be dead of such a look. And when I am finally dead, it will be at the hands of a man with just such a look on his face. Today or another day, it will not matter when I go to my father."

Ifreann was as tall as Tancredi, as bulky as Kemper, and he had much more meaning and weight to him. Perhaps this Ifreann was a young man, as it was said of him, but there was nothing to correlate his appearance to. Perhaps he was handsome, if a man with a great purple pumpkin of a head can be called handsome. Well, yes, Ifreann was handsome; he was probably the most imposing man that any of them had ever encountered: but he did have a high complexion.

Dana Coscuin had gone quickly up the stairways to the suite at the top. The code must be broken down here. The code had never been anything but a prideful little bit of vaunting: that each person must handle his own antagonist himself. An antagonist too strong had come now, a counterpart too far-fetched. There are some things that cannot be allowed to happen. The two philosophies were pretty evenly balanced, but the two persons were not. Well, Dana would intervene between them with his life then. It was Ifreann or Dana sooner or later anyhow. Let it be sooner.

But Catherine Dembinska had gone. Somewhere over the roofs she had gone. It was only a hasty note she had left there. Dana read it and pocketed it:

"Dana, for my life I flee from him. For my life, never let him know where I have gone."

Ifreann came in. How could so large and heavy a man move absolutely silently?

"My fellow townsman has not waited my coming?" Ifreann asked. "How can a citizen of Krakow be so lacking in the social graces?"

"You knew her in Krakow?" Dana asked tightly.

"From childhood, yes, or from monsterhood in my case. That is one of the reasons she must be dealt with. She knows or suspects secrets about me that no one else alive even suspects. Certain dead persons who know them are silenced even beyond the usual death silencing—I have considerable influence on the lower side."

"You are all false braggard. You are nothing but a big fat man," Dana said.

"You know that I am more, Dana. But the curious Catherine has

gone. I remember now that she was always a roof sparrow, that she once nearly did me to death on roofs as Tancredi did the Savoyard Louis Saussure. I had intended to kill her this evening, before my supper, as aperitif. Now I will have to wait till after."

"You will not kill that girl, Ifreann."

"Yes, Dana, I will kill that girl. You know it."

"Then I will kill you."

"Then one of us will kill the other, true. But I am not all sorry it is delayed. How else would we become close friends for the while? How else have the pleasant interval before I devour you? Now I will go through her trunks and other things."

"You will not touch one of her things, Ifreann, or I will hack off your hands, here, now," Dana swore. "Back down, big man, out, outside!"

"Dana boy, your eyes are as spooky as those of Charley Ocean," but Ifreann backed out of the room.

"Tancredi, Kemper, carry out Catherine's things. We will soon know where to take them," Dana called.

"It will be very easy for me to trace her by them," Ifreann smiled.

"It will not be," Mariella interposed. "You have lost the neighborhood, purple-head. The ears and the eyes of it belong to us now, not to you."

"It will be handy to have the unrecognized but effectual heads of the two revolutions here under one roof," Ifreann said.

"You brag about our role, then you brag about your own," Kemper told him.

"Not so much as you would think in either case," said Ifreann. "Even braggards sometimes underestimate their own effect. Paris is a microcosm of the world, we are a microcosm of Paris. What pleasures, what contrasts, what tensions we can set up. What fruitful interchange."

"Ah, we have boxed the bear up in his own cage," Charley Ocean muttered. "We will pull one claw a day, one fang a day. And you have to sleep sometime, bear."

"Do I now? Nobody has ever seen me sleep, ever, anywhere. It is part of my legend that I never sleep."

"You are nervous already, bear?" Charley Ocean asked Ifreann.

"Nervous? Yes, Charley, the Son of the Devil is always nervous. It is his nature. I drag broken nerve ends like lopped lengths of fire-hose, but you cannot see them. I understand, Ocean, how you spooked the brown lion Asad. I also am tempted to cry out 'Man, do not look at me with those eyes!' " But Ifreann was grinning a big and blood-thirsty grin and he didn't seem nervous. And yes,

there was a strong wrong liking for this Ifreann in all of them. Be he monster or be he man, there was a sharp vitality in him that called them like a whole new unbroken world.

Ifreann had previously arranged it: now servitors brought huge pots and kettles and platters, an outsized and excellent supper for them all.

The revolution began scarce thirty hours after that.

February 22-23-24 of the year 1848 were three eventful days. They were crammed full of the unexpected for all the hours of them. They were really comic days, farce-filled days. Farce in February, Tragedy in June.

It would not, of course, be like the primordial French Revolution of 1789. Neither would it be like the secundial Revolution of 1830. But it could well be more bloody than both of them put together. There were human barrelsful of blood waiting to be spilled, eager for it really. There were more people now, and they had more blood in them.

Things were confused but they were not extreme. France, although technically bankrupt in the paper accounting of it, was the most prosperous country in Europe, and Europe was more prosperous, better fed, better clad than she had been at any time since the thirteenth century. There were steep inequities, there was poor division of wealth, but there was wealth to be divided or used. Revolutions do not come from completely empty stomachs or larders.

It would seem that there was very little repression in France and almost nothing over which to hold a revolution. There was incompetence, there was complete misunderstanding of all the newly developed problems, but nobody had sought redress on these; the proper protests had not even been phrased yet. But there were those with a vested interest in a blood revolution in Paris and throughout France, and if France went down in blood, nearly every country in Europe would do likewise.

It began with plans for a banquet, which was a code word for the revolution. A banquet site had been leased for ten days—quite a lengthy banquet.

The newspaper *La Réforme* had been laying out reformist programs for four and a half years. A large percentage of the reforms had already been achieved. An extension of the newspaper was the great reformist banquets that had been held for several years, and a giant one was scheduled for February 22, 1848. Perhaps the first blood of the 1848 revolution was shed in the anger at the price of the banquet tickets being raised from

three francs each to six francs, to keep out the rabble.

The permissive government had sometimes seemed to sponsor and sometimes to withdraw support for the banquet. The banquet would include huge processions. The banquet, in fact, would be the revolutions.

It was all "down with the government and up with reform" in the popular press. The government was inclined to agree. The government was looking for a substitute for itself; it would turn its functions over to almost anyone who wanted them.

The government was Louis Philippe the citizen-king and Marie Amelie the queen; Guizot, a very good man who had been recommending himself for scapegoat for some time, was chief minister. Duchâtel was Minister of the Interior, Marshal Sebastiani was Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hébert was Keeper of the Seals. They were all good men; none of them had been able to adjust to new problems, and still less had the opposition.

Rambuteau was Prefect for the Seine; and (here there is real overlapping and confusion) Delessert was Prefect of Police, Jaqueminot was head of the National Guard, Lardenois was commander of the Municipal Guard, Tiburce Sebastiani (the brother of the Foreign Affairs Minister) was in command of the Army units in Paris.

On Monday evening, February 21, Dana Coscuin went out to look for Catherine Dembinska. He knew only approximately where she had rooms: her baggage had been transferred in two stages, and nobody was supposed to know where she was. Dana sat on a bench on a near boulevard, and Catherine came out and joined him. She said they would go out and celebrate the last night of peace.

Dana took her to the Théâtre Historique where Dumas' *Le Chevalier de Maison-Rouge* was playing. It was a gayer play in the performance than it deserved to be. Everybody was in high spirits. Catherine was a quiet sensation (she was quite attractive in a rich and slightly foreign way), and Dana was in the green shirt that had become almost a uniform. The audience broke up the play several times. It encored again and again the song *Mourir pour la patrie*, which was not a very good song, nor particularly relevant to the current situation. But the real play that was playing at the Théâtre Historique, and at every theatre in town, was the farce *The Eve of the Revolution*.

They walked afterwards. The town was not inclined to go to bed at all that night. In the Place de la Bastille a man was making a rhythmic exhortation 'Blood, blood, blood' to the crowds. Catherine took up her own place at the foot of the July Column

(we are not sure, it was possibly the highest thing in Paris at that time, the Eiffel Tower was forty years in the future) and began her own rhythmic exhortation 'Sanity, sanity, sanity.' It was the two revolutions in their simplest forms.

Dana went by the Place de la Madeleine where the 'banquet' was to be held. The word was out, just about midnight, that the banquet had been cancelled: all the sponsors had withdrawn. The workmen, working by torchlight, continued to work, setting up tables and benches and trestles and pavilions. They said that there would be a banquet, or there would be 'something.' Various unofficial sponsors were already furnishing food, and there were coffee stalls a-going.

It really began about midnight (the very start of February 22), the banquet, the revolution, the something. For three days it would have to be a remarkable balancing act, whether or not the revolution should degenerate into a blood-bath. There were multitudes of persons from every country in Europe there, enjoying, watching whether it would be played out as a comedy, a farce, or a bleak tragedy.

There were demonstrations and there were processions all the morning of February 22. Crowds (not really mobs yet) invaded the Palais Bourbon. A little later they invaded the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The crowds were friendly, loud, and aimless.

At two o'clock, Odilon Barret laid before the Chamber (it was considering some business about the Bank of Bordeaux) a demand for the impeachment for Minister Guizot. He was laughed at (by Guizot harder than by anybody); Guizot had been trying very hard to find someone to give the government to. It was a question whether Guizot should go to save the King, or whether the King should go to save Guizot and the ministerial government.

In the afternoon the people built bonfires in the Champs Élysées. The first real fighting was in the rue Bourg-l'abbé and rue Mauconseil. It was between units of the Municipal Guard and unidentified demonstrators. The Municipal Guard had been subjected to a strong campaign of defamation, and yet it was the police unit that was closest to the people, that had been (till the last year) the favorite of the people.

There wasn't much fighting that first day, however. The people were in a happy mood and nobody had given them any issues they could taste. It was carnival time for them. The advocates of blood were angry and frustrated, and they worked harder, all through the night of February 22.

Things looked much better for the blood advocates by the

morning of February 23. The uproar covered a large section of the City by then. The area of revolutionary outbreak was from rue Montmartre on the west, the line of Grands Boulevards running from the Madeleine to the Bastille on the north and east, the Seine on the south.

In the very early morning, Tancredi, Mariella and Kemper had moved out of the Ifreann house in Montreuil Street and had taken rooms near the Madeleine. Charley Oceaan had stayed in the house to watch Ifreann and his associates, to spook Ifreann, and to give the lie to any idea that Ifreann had evicted them. Dana Coscuin neither moved nor remained. He came and went as he wished. He became a man of multiple residence, much of the time with Catherine Dembinska, much of the time with Tancredi and Mariella and Kemper, considerable time in the house in Montreuil, and the rest of the time (most of the time, day and night) in the streets.

The National Guard had been sent out that morning of February 23 to establish some sort of order in the city. The National Guard promptly went to pieces. In every unit there were men prepared to shout 'Vive la Réforme' at every order given them, and to refuse to move, and to obstruct others from moving. The units fell to fist fighting and shooting among themselves. Many of the men joined the demonstrators. Many others simply threw down their arms, and these were taken by the demonstrators.

The King, a little after mid-day, dismissed both Guizot and Duchâtel. He asked Duchâtel to carry the news of his own and Guizot's dismissal to the Chamber which was then in session. It was not immediately noticed, but there was no government of any sort after that. The comedy quickly turned into farce. The King, at about four o'clock, asked Count Molé to form a new government. It is said that everybody avoided the King and that Molé was the only one he could catch. Molé said that he would see what he could do, after he had had his dinner.

The red flag made its first 1848 appearance that afternoon in a procession from the faubourg Saint-Antoine to the Madeleine. This procession seemed to be of very mixed persons. It ran into elements of the fourteenth regiment that was guarding the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Someone in the procession shot at the soldiers. The soldiers shot back. Fifty-two persons were killed.

It was alleged that Charles Lagrange of the paraders had fired the first shot. Lagrange (he was a known man) always denied firing it. It was also said that the first shot was fired by a Corsican named Giacomini; also that the shots were fired at the soldiers by a man unknown to the other paraders but who was in their midst.

The dead bodies were put to use. They were loaded onto carts and driven to different parts of Paris; orations were given over them. The bodies (more than half of them were those of soldiers, but they had been stripped) were driven around Paris for three hours. By then paving stones were already being ripped up and barricades built.

At midnight, Count Molé (he had had quite a long dinner but quite a short ministry) told the King that he was unable to form a government.

Everybody was crying 'Down with the Government.' The Government had been down for some hours and nobody wanted to pick it up.

King Louis Philippe told Louis Thiers, whom he hated, to form a government.

And the King told Bugeaud, a old veteran from Africa, to take command of all armed forces. This replaced Sebastiani in command of Army units and Jacqueminot in command of the National Guard. And in the early morning, this Bugeaud decided to sweep Paris clean with four columns of troops.

The first column started out at five a.m. and by seven had reached the Place de Grève with twelve dead. Twelve dead was too many for some, and not enough to satisfy others; it depended on which revolution they adhered to.

The second column started for the Bastille by way of the Bourse and the Grands Boulevards. It wouldn't get there.

The third column was to follow the other two and to prevent the barricades from reforming. The fourth column was to go to the Panthéon.

At two in the morning, Thiers had set out on foot to look for politicians to form a new government, sometimes having to take a roundabout way through the streets because of the barricades. The only politician he found in his pre-dawn walk was a man named Remusat. At eight o'clock he came back to the Tuileries and told the King that he was unable to form a government. He suggested Odilon Barrot, a far leftist who called himself a man of the people, but who was not liked by the people, for the job. The King said yes; it would be Odilon Barrot who would form the new government then. But Barrot did not, in spite of many calls sent out for him, report to the King. Nobody had cried louder than Odilon that the government must be headed by a man of the people, but he became very reluctant now.

Men out of their minds, all of them, men walking around without any brains! There were serious suggestions that silly gas had contaminated the air, that it had brought all the people of

Paris to a condition of silliness. Illuminating gas, still used to only a limited extent in Paris and hardly at all anywhere else, was regarded with superstition. Well, something had turned Paris into a silly town.

Meanwhile, the second column of troops, commanded by Bedeau, came to a barricade in the boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle. This barricade was manned mostly by National Guardsmen who had kept their weapons but left the Guard the day before. The barricade force was commanded by a business man named Fauvelle-Delabarre who had commanded most of these same guardsmen the day before. Bedeau did not want to open fire. General Bedeau was considered a great talker, and he believed he could talk the barricade down.

He told the barricade men the news, that Odilon Barrot (the self-styled man of the people) had been designated to form the new government. Then the business man Fauvelle-Delabarre started in: he was a much better talker than the General Bedeau. He told Bedeau that it was all a mistake that Frenchmen should ever attack Frenchmen, anywhere, any time. He fair talked the ears off Bedeau. He talked the General into leaving his troops there commanderless before the barricade. He talked the General into coming with him to the Tuileries to talk to Bugeaud, to talk to the King, to talk to everybody whatsoever and explain to them that all this business was a mistake.

The General did leave his troops there and go with Fauvelle-Delabarre. They talked to Commander Bugeaud and convinced him, they talked to the Princes and the King and convinced them that there was no reason for violence in the boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle or anywhere, that the whole idea of sweeping Paris clean with troops was nonsense. This Fauvelle-Delabarre was a rational man.

Meanwhile, that second column, left inactive and uncommanded, simply began to melt away before the taunts of the people. Some joined the men at the barricade. Some simply threw down their guns and went home. Bedeau, coming back to what was left of his troops, saw Odilon Barrot among the people of the barricades, exhorting them out of their calm to action. This Odilon was also a talking man, but he had a single line.

He still shrilled that the government should be put into the hands of men of the people. He himself had been chosen to form the new government, if he would ever get with it. Instead, he came to danger points and inflamed the people against the government. And actually, at the moment, there wasn't any government.

But the confrontation at the barricades in the boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle passed bloodlessly. Such was not the situation everywhere.

Small groups of the Municipal Guard tried to intervene when students and deserters from the National Guard began to burn buildings aimlessly between the Hôtel de Ville and the Château d'Eau. Then the students and irregulars and mobbers suddenly began to slaughter the greatly outnumbered Municipal Guard detachment. It was ghastly and total.

The first column of troops, still fairly well held together, stood and watched the butchery. National Guard regulars and Army regulars cheered on the mob and jeered the dying Municipal Guard.

So the partisans of the Red Revolution were not completely without their successes in those days. They had worked very hard to build up rivalry and jealousy between the various Guards, and now it paid off.

The King Louis Phillipe was angry in the latter morning that Odilon Barrot had not reported to him to form a government. The King felt isolated. Nobody was reporting to him, nobody would call on him at all. He dressed himself in the uniform of General and went out on horseback. A few of the troops cheered him, but others cried 'Vive la Réforme,' and still others laughed at him. The citizen-king had once been an imposing figure on horseback, but he had aged somewhat since then, and now he had lost confidence. He gave it up and went back to the Tuileries.

Then a newspaper editor came to the King. The editor told the King that he had just decided that the King should resign, that he the editor was insisting on it. The King said all right; he would resign. What were the terms of the resignation? This was the real climax of the three-day farce.

Emile de Girardin was the editor of the newspaper *La Presse*. He told the King that he must abdicate in favor of his grandson the ten year old Count of Paris, and that the Duchess of Orléans would be Regent. The King wrote out an abdication. He didn't mention the Regency in it. He didn't like his daughter-in-law the Duchess of Orléans.

A lawyer named Crémieux came in and put a frock coat and a bowler hat on the King, so nobody would recognize him, and led him out. Everyone in town would recognize the King no matter what he wore, but nobody paid any attention to him. He went with his wife to St. Cloud and then to England, and still nobody paid any attention to him.

The editors and staff-men of two newspapers *The National* and *The Reform* got together to decide what sort of government France should have and who should be included in it. Nobody seemed to find anything unusual about this; people waited with considerable interest for the outcome of the meeting.

(Much more than a century after this, certain men would begin to worry that someday the communications media might become so powerful that they might dictate the make-up of governments. But it has already happened in this pertinent past. The newspapers were quite powerful, and two of them did dictate the events absolutely.)

Émile de Girardin, who had successfully commanded the King to abdicate, was too small a man and his paper *La Presse* was too small a paper to enter into these high newspaper councils.

Most of the men at *The National* and *The Reform* were also politicians and some of them belonged to the Chamber of Deputies. At their council they decided that *The National* should have the majority in the Government but that some of the ministries should go to editors of *The Reform*.

The Chamber of Deputies met in the Palais Bourbon that afternoon. Marie, a *National* man and a lawyer, made a speech.

Odilon Barrot made a speech asking everyone to acclaim the Count of Paris as King. He misjudged the temper of the Chamber, or else he was being devious.

Ledru-Rollin, a *Reform* man, seemed to have developed into a sort of chairman now. The alleged president of the Chamber (one Sauzet) seemed to have disappeared about this time. Ledru-Rollin also was having trouble keeping order.

Lamartine, the noted poet and writer (unofficial member of *The National* for a long time, but official member for only about an hour), made a speech. He called for the formation of a Provisional Government. Lamartine was a personable and known man and he was shoved to the fore as frontsmen.

The Chamber broke up with nothing decided. They left the Palais Bourbon with nothing but the beginning of a list of names. Lamartine and Ledru-Rollin led the way to the Hôtel de Ville where crowds were assembling.

And soon there were very large crowds gathered by torchlight around the Hôtel de Ville as night came. All that the leaders had yet was an incomplete list of names. Someone suggested that Lamartine go out on the balcony and read it to the people. Lamartine said that it would embarrass him, since his name was on the list. Someone suggested that the lawyer Crémieux should go out and read it. Crémieux said that it would embarrass him,

since his name was *not* on the list. So they added Crémieux' name to the list.

Finally Lamartine went out on the balcony and cried the words 'The Republic has been Proclaimed.' It hadn't been agreed till then, or even discussed much, whether it would be a Republic. The people cheered, and they made banners with the word *Republic* on them. So there was a great celebration that night, the third and final night of the farce.

It isn't known who decided on the final list of men, who really selected the government. It was done in the offices of *The National* that night, however. Some of the men of the new government had to read it in the February 25, Friday morning, *National* to know for sure whether they were in the government. The final, or almost final list was:

President of the Council: Dupont de l'Eure. (He was very old, from the first French Revolution, but most of the others were fairly young men.)

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Lamartine.

Minister of Interior: Ledru-Rollin.

Minister of War: General Bedeau. (Bedeau hadn't known about his selection, and he refused the job.)

Minister of Finance: Michel Goudchaux. (He was a Jewish banker and a writer of articles in *The National*.)

Minister of Navy: Arago. (Among many other things, he was an astronomer.)

Minister of Agriculture and Trade: Bethmont. (He was a lawyer who had defended *L'Atelier* and other newspapers in court cases, but he hadn't any background in agriculture or trade.)

Minister of Public Works: Marie. (He did know something of public works. He knew considerable of affairs generally.)

Minister of Education: Hippolyte Sarnot.

Governor General of Algeria: Cavaignac.

Supreme Commander of the National Guard: Courtais.

Marie was to be Mayor of Paris as well as Minister of Public Works. The double role may have been to give the *National* men a clear majority.

There were several good men on this list. The men were at least as good as those of the King's last ministry, Guizot's ministry. Nobody knew what sort of Constitution, if any, these men were to be ministers under.

But France had her Republic, her second.

And that three-day frolic, that was the (almost bloodless) Revolution of 1848? No, that was only the final scenes of the

comedy, *The Eve of the Revolution*, and the farcical introduction to the Revolution itself. There was more to come in the months ahead.

A thing happened to Dana Coscuin in Paris that had previously happened to him in Turin. A gentleman, an educated man from his aspect, called after him in the street.

"Wait, sir! Wait, my Count! Wonder of wonders that you are in Paris!"

Dana almost guessed the mistake from the man's approach, and he was doubly puzzled.

"Count, Count Cyril," the man called, "—but you are not Count Cyril."

"I try to be as like him as I can," Dana said, "but I am disadvantaged, never having met him in the flesh."

"You are not the Count Cyril Prasinos," the man said, "You are a much younger man. But I am glad to see you, sir. You are a fine young man."

"Do I look like Count Cyril?" Dana asked.

"Not really. But it is something in the shape of you, something in your walk. Good day. I am glad that I spoke to you."

"Where did you see the Count?" Dana asked.

"One may not speak of that. It is secret. Good day, young sir."

Dana had his own small following in Paris. He had become something of a symbol to a small group of Irishmen, freedom advocates, who were in Paris. Dana didn't understand why he was a symbol, neither did this mixed bunch of Irishman. Dana knew less of affairs than any of the bunch.

Catherine Dembinska had become very much a symbol to a larger number of Polish freedom-seekers; and Catherine did know as much of affairs as any of them.

"It has almost gone well here in Paris, for the first little part of it," she said, "and there is some hope that it will go well in Poland. It has been almost bloodless here. That is one thing, although it is not the main thing. Nothing has really been done, of course, but space has been cleared so that something may possibly be done. And the witherers, the poisoners have stumbled and done badly. They never cease, though, and we may not.

"This has gone on forever, Dana, though it is hard to trace through garbled history. And it must still go on forever. For every year, for every decade, for every life it will go on. We are the People Militant on Earth until we finally join the People Triumphant in the Kingdom, which is not quite a ministerial kingdom, though we will all have our designations in it. For all

your own life and for the life of all your children, you will carry on the green battle, Dana, and I will not be with you."

"You will always be with me, Catherine. Even the loss of a little flesh, should that premonition of yours prove true, will not inhibit that. You are always with me, my bird, my lark."

"You called the little brown-skin your lark too."

"How could you know that? Yes, I did and I do. We will never have enough larks. I will not give up on anyone I have ever loved, and you do not give up on me, not even if one of us must leave the world. You keep something of me, or I will keep something of you."

"Oh, don't keep my head as Jane Blaye keeps that of her husband Christian, Dana. Some lesser bone or bone splinter will do."

"I will see to that, if that time ever comes."

"I and thou, Dana, and the pleasure of each other's company," came the overpowering voice on the first day following that three-day farce. "The gutters are not as red as I had hoped, but let that not spoil our friendship."

It was big Ifreann Chortovitch, the man who never slept, though his eyes were red-rimmed as if he needed sleep.

"Get back in your rocks, ogre," Dana called with a merry recklessness. "You are a sick stumble-clown. Be gone."

"Oh, I'm not out of the rocks at all, Dana. You misunderstand me. I'm out of the Ocean, a saltier and more sulphurous one than you ever sailed. I really am the Son of the Devil, you know, and I make looser deals than my father does. I know that you are not above deals with the Devil. Take a chance. Come on an orgy with me. We haven't really known each other, and I have so little time."

"I'm selective even in my mates for orgies, Ifreann. You're a clod, an excrement."

"I will play on your weakness again. You are afraid to be afraid. I say that you are afraid to drink with me, to sing with me, to outrage the populace with me; you are afraid to match stories with me, to be man against me. You are as afraid as is big Kemper who comes here."

"Big Kemper is not afraid of you, clumsy Ifreann," Kemper said, for he had just arrived, to the two of them in the street there.

"Did you know, Dana, that big Kemper is going away to the Germanies with me in just three days?" Ifreann asked.

"No. Kemper is going away to the Germanies against you, Ifreann," Kemper said. "I am not sure in how many days I will go."

"I am a man magnet!" Ifreann shouted. "You laugh, Dana. You laugh, Kemper. Wait. Wait a short time only. I draw the others to

me here. They cannot refuse the dark enticement. Did I not write to you, Dana, before you even knew what company you would be joined in, that there would be four of you and that I would manipulate you in a great unmelody, that the incomplete music in each of you would be blended with my power into a devilish bit of art? This is the 'Paris in the Springtime' that I promised you, though it is not quite spring. You see. They come."

Ifreann was already quite drunk. It might be that they had never seen him sober, but neither had they ever seen him so dark and glowing.

"You lie, dog devil," came the strange carrying whisper of Tancredi Cima, and Tancredi appeared still some distance down the street but striding resolutely towards them. "You lie that I am afraid to drink with you, to sing with you, to commit outrage with you. You lie that I am afraid to match stories and prophecies with you. You lie that I am afraid to be a man against you. Shrivel, big man. I will show you how we kick devils along like footballs in Sardinia."

"Have I said these things?" Ifreann said innocently and with multiple winking.

"You have a whisper as carrying as my own," Tancredi charged. "Yes, you have said these things, you have whispered these things. Have at you, dog devil! I will see you with your tail between your legs."

"One. Two. Three," Ifreann counted. "Here comes number four. He will seem surprised to see us gathered here, but he will not be. You are afraid, Oceaan, you are afraid to set your spook against my spook."

It was Charley Oceaan, dapper and dark, who came. "I'll kill you in your cups, Ifreann," he said. "That is the Devil's own way to die."

"I have another house here in Paris that you don't know about," Ifreann said. "Here it is, right at hand."

Ifreann unlocked the door of a house there and entered, and the four young men followed him in.

There was a region in the head or person of Dana Coscuin, there is a region in every man (one does not know whether there is a corresponding region in women) that is a veritable underworld, a wrong place that should not be, and is. This region was called *Sheol* by the Jews, and *Hades* or *Kolasis* by the Gentiles. The Holy Vulgate names it *Infernum*, and the Irish call it *Ifreann* which is the same word badly adapted. Many primitive persons call it the Ocean; they do not mean the known ocean of the world, but another one. Charley Oceaan called this place *Océan Affreux*.

Tancredi Cima called it simply *Sotterraneo*. Kemper Gruenland called it *Luecke*, the void. Doctors, not understanding it, once called it the Subconscious; later, understanding it even less, they called it the Unconscious.

It is not a state or a disposition. It is a place and a substance. It is fragmented, but it is not all in the mind or in minds. Sometimes it overlays a whole worldly region. Sometimes it is even behind a door. Now it was behind a particular door in the rue de la Ferme-des-Mathurins, a short street off the Madeleine.

Four men of a company followed a devil in by that door, and inside they found that they were on the inside of their own heads.

This house of Ifreann Chortovitch had aspects which each of the four young men had believed were to be found only in his own private underworld. It was as though one's dirtiest thoughts were all set out in a line and a garish light played on them. What sort of a house was this which struck such dismal accord with the several private worlds? Oh, it was a comfortable and well-appointed piece of Hell. This Ifreann who had brought them in there was a haunt, a spook, a real monster unchained; but each of the four had known the real and private face of this monster before seeing it now, each had known it in the intimacy of his own head, of his own under-brain.

Shock at this, but by no mean silent shock. That would not be permitted here. Be it said that the monster was a hearty host. Often there is a heartiness in a hell-company that simply should not be. Quickly, immediately, as though happening before, as though intruded backwards in time, there was the shouting, the towering unmelody, the scarlet bloodship. There was crooked revel. And time itself was crooked. This had long been going on when it started.

They drink Holland gin in Hell. That had always been known. This is not to demean the drink by associations. They acquired a taste for it early, and they do not easily change. Ifreann had lugs and cases of Holland gin for his guests. They drank a lot of it. It had been near evening when they went through the door, before time turned crooked.

They sing a lot of very loud unmelody in Hell. There really was a devilish bit of art in the incomplete melody of Dana and Tancredi and Kemper and Charley Oceaan blended in with the overpowering blast of Ifreann Chortovitch. This song, if it was song, had the distorted element of other things: it had been going on for a long time when it started.

It was song to raise the roof by, it was song to drive stout men into the ground like stakes by, it was music to geld behemoths by,

to sink ships by, or to hang burghers by.

All four of these young men had known hearty male bashes, the *machada*, the he-goat mobbing. They had giant-sized orgies in the Germanies; the Teutonic sagas carry only pale echoes of them. In Ireland they sometimes combine drinkings with horse-breakings and rip-tide boatings and cudgel fighting, and these parties are often rampant. In Sardinia, drinking men will go after wild bulls to take them by the horns and try to break their necks; or they will attempt to climb precipices at night or blindfolded. On Basse-Terre, which is French Guadeloupe, young buckos full of sugar rum will swim out into sharkful waters and slash their own forearms bloody to call the long sharks to the challenge of the short sharp knives. "And the way we hunt lions in Senegal ..." But had Charley Ocean been in Senegal? Charley had been everywhere. All of them had been everywhere. They were hombrones all.

But they had not before been in this particular company. What matter? The pure of heart cannot be harmed even by the presence of the Devil. But what of those who only comparatively speaking are pure of heart? What of those who have been bescrubbed again and again and can come only dirty gray in heart and soul? What of those who have achieved purity of heart no more than three times in their lifetimes and then had fallen abysmally? What of those who are going to achieve it next season, after certain other things have finally been put behind? What of Dana and Tancredi and Kemper and Charley Ocean?

There was loud degradation that cannot be put into words, and shortened or distorted time. There had been one morning come since this had started, but no one had paid attention to it.

Possibly there were elements of hallucination here; possibly there were elements of literal hellishness. But there was certainly adventure, beyond wild horse breaking in Ireland or shark baiting off Basse-Terre; there was incredibly daring conflict with monsters that are clear off-world. There were hearty and heroic encounters, and deep Ifreann was the core of the achieving fellowship. These were not to be remembered things; they were far too strong for that. They were things that no man with proper man's soul in him would be able to do. Here were hyena hunts through the iron meadows of Hell.

Then more vulgar and less heroic things, but still towering in their hold. Monsters yet, violent and smelly monsters. There was illusion, and there was reality betrayed. There were visions of children spitted on spits and roasted. But the young men could not reach out and touch these sights. If it was Ifreann illusion,

then Ifreann was a master illusionist. There was one who began to gather himself against Ifreann, but this was hardly noticed by the other three.

Knocking off the tops of Holland gin bottles, and knocking off the heads of pitiful old women. Drinking the staggering stuff, and it was drinking the blood of infants. Knifing tiger sharks, and it was knifing your own grandfathers. Cutting up roast meat on the plate, and eating the very eyes and cheeks of your present comrades.

Sadism and perversion presented on a new track then. Maidens deflowered by giant hounds, and rotted bodies coupling with slaving devils. More rapid, more shaking perversions on Ifreann's bioscope, or thanatoscope. It was here, however, that Charley Oceaan challenged Ifreann, spook against spook, illusion against illusion; and he cracked all that devil's projections down the middle.

But time was still out of joint, or rushing by. It was second night, it had been second night for a long time. Oceaan cracked Ifreann's face down the middle too, it seemed, for that man was now crazy-cracked, cracked even for a devil, blind and slaving and falling.

"Wait, Oceaan," Tancredi had whispered out of twisted lips, "don't hunt them all off the scene. There was one creature there, one witch-lioness, I want her now."

"Be a clear man, Tancredi," Oceaan laughed, "or I will spook you also. I will crack you wide open. I can conjure also. I have just done so. There is coming for you, Tancredi, a more fierce female than ever that witch-lioness."

"Not—not—"

"Yes. She will be here quite soon, Tancredi."

There had been considerable feasting in the night and day and into the second night. It had not actually been roast child, as Ifreann had set up or tried to set up by illusion; it had mostly been roast pork and roast kid.

There had been tall stories told, the tallest in any of their lifetimes. These four young men had *not* been afraid to match the devil, story for story, prophecy for prophecy. More than that, there had been stories created. Did you ever hear a man vaunt that he had drunk the devil himself under the table?

Four young men, Dana, Tancredi, Kemper, and Oceaan could now make that vaunt. They had done it. Ifreann Chortovitch was under one of the great tables, cracked and crazy and dispossessed and stupid.

It hadn't been a short thing, though it melts all into one blur. It

had been a night and a day and another night of it. It had a stench now; yet there would later be a wrong nostalgic flavor of it that would be with the four men all their lives. They had had the pleasure of the Devil's company, and it had been crookedly memorable.

Charley Oceaan had been making up packages and bundles for some time, papers and registers and things from Ifreann's crooked house. Then, just at second morning, Catherine Dembinska came. She opened the door. She had a hand cart with her.

"I will kill you, girl," Ifreann mumbled from the floor, still apparently unconscious.

"Yes. But not this morning," Catherine said. Catherine and Charley Oceaan loaded the packages and bundles of Ifreann's things onto the hand cart.

"A chilly good morning to you, Dana," Catherine said. "You are out of my heart for the while."

Dana was weary and confused. He had drunk the Devil under the table, but what else had he done?

"Wait until this flavor leaves me," Dana said. "Then it may be that you will take me in again."

Mariella Cima came in. She was more ingenious and more valid than the most vivid of Ifreann's creations. She was a more fearsome female even than the witch-lioness that had been one of the final projections. She took the dazed Tancredi by the ear. She literally lifted him up and dragged him out of there by that ear. She ruptured the form of it, she tore the lobe. And that distorted lobe would dangle on Tancredi for the rest of his life.

But Tancredi got off easier than any of the other three of them. A distorted ear is nothing to the distortions that had taken place in Kemper, in Charley Oceaan, in Dana Coscuin. One does not hold high party with the Devil and come away from it unmarked.

XI

A BLIND MAN IN THE DARK

Catherine had become listless, and charming. It was all in learning how to look at her. Dana had once looked at Elaine Kingsberry when Catherine was present: that would almost be impossible now. There was no limit to the attractiveness of Catherine Dembinska, except the limits of the eye and mind of the beholder. The more educated the eye, the more wonderful was Catherine.

"How could it be that Ifreann has an Irish name (the Irish name for Hell) and he was born in your Krakow of Poland?" Dana asked Catherine when they were together in the lull days between the storms.

"This Ifreann, this devil does not have any Polish blood at all, Dana; I am happy to say that," Catherine told it. "Ifreann's father was the Devil. His mother was a governess from Ireland and her name was Katie Noonan. Thus he was without Polish blood on either his human or his unhuman side. Ifreann was born in a hay field between Skawine and Krakow in the year 1830."

"1830? That can't be, Catherine. That would make him no more than eighteen years old, younger than either of us."

"Who is to say that devils and humans age at the same rate, Dana? Besides, it is said that he appeared about twelve years old when he was born. Katie Noonan was firm in her own statements; so 'The Devil' was written in the line for the Father on Ifreann's certificate. And then they asked her what she wanted to name the young brat. 'Aw hell!' (*Och Ifreann* is what Katie said in Irish) 'Does it matter?' So they wrote down the name Ifreann.

"This Ifreann killed children around Krakow in his precocious years. Myself and other contemporary children gave testimony to this, but we were not believed. It was said that wolves or other animals actually killed those children, but we knew better."

"Whether that Son of the Devil is half Irish or not, Catherine, I do not know," Dana said, "but I believe that you must be. That account you have given has winter peat-fire smoke in it. Come

with me now and make appointment, and we can be married tomorrow."

"No, Dana. Why do men want to interfere in these things anyway? Let the woman tell what man she will marry, and when: and let the man accept it. I have already told you that I intend to marry you. When I am ready to tell you, I will tell you when it will be."

"Will it be this year?"

"Yes, late this year, Dana."

"Here in Paris?"

"No, it will be near my own Krakow, and a little towards Skawine, in whatever country they happen to be at that time."

"My company has broken up, Catherine. I'd thought it would go on forever."

"No, it has not and it will not break up. Not even death will break it. I myself will still be a member of your company after I am dead. It is true that Kemper Gruenland has gone off to the Germanies. So has Ifreann, the enemy of your company. There're some rough things coming to that region. The Germanies are always much more violent than France, but that violence is less bruited around. It is true that Tancredi and Mariella have gone off to Sardinia. This Sardinia must be nine times blasted in its own fire and nine times purified in its own blood before it will be able to effect its own leadership in the movements. There must be a myriad of slashing teeth pulled there before that island can be trusted with even a bloody leadership. And there must be many a hot man murdered before it can come to a rational violence. Big Kemper has done some of this selective murder and fang-pulling. Yourself and rough Brume have done some. And now Tancredi goes home to this task; and Mariella brings Spain to Sardinia. Spain has gone there often.

"But the world cannot do without the strength of little Sardinia. Its charcoal-burners really did start the fires that will burn much of the world. That fire is needed, but it cannot burn in every direction at once. There are even some elements of that murderous madness that are needed by the world. Consider poor Jude Revanche whom you blinded. Dana, the world couldn't do without his power. It would have been a little lacking if he had not lived."

"Even Charley Oceaan is going to leave town, I believe," Dana said. "And if you leave then, Catherine, I will be alone and aimless. My own company will be scattered, and my own task, whatever it is, will be still largely unbegin."

"Ah, your task on these lull days is to sit and talk with me, Dana,

and watch the world for every betraying sign. It's a walleyed unbroken colt, this world, but it has the look in its walleyes before it acts."

Dana and Catherine were eating at an open-air table in the Madeleine, on a day less chilly than those before. And Dana was back in Catherine's heart.

"Was it not, Catherine, that yourself and Charley Ocean planned the whole Ifreann orgy so that you could rob Ifreann of documents?"

"No, of course not, Dana. Ifreann himself planned the Ifreann orgy. He really is a man-magnet when he's in his strength. That thing had to happen. It was written in your own black stars, in those of all of you. We planned only to take a slight advantage of what had to happen."

"Was it only a slight advantage, Catherine?"

"Yes. The documents, the registers are so ambiguous as to be maddening. Part of them are clearly frauds and were meant to deceive if found. Others of them are genuine, but still they are in their own false framework and they can only be followed by corkscrew minds."

"Has it ever been serious, Catherine, or is it only the game? The events in Paris, so far, are more comic."

"Dana, it has been deadly serious from the earliest beginnings, and it is a chain of miracles that the world has not already died of its own hot business. There is really a furnace burning under our feet. We live on a frail framework above this everlasting furnace, and parts of the framework are always catching flame and falling off into the deep flame-ocean. There is purifying fire and there is foul fire; and that under our feet is foul. Just before the framework breaks up and falls into this furnace, someone shoves in a reinforcing plank or two to strengthen the shaky over-structure; and this will help for a day, for an hour, for a second. And then, twice as much of our support will fall off into the flame."

"Dana, the enemy of honest revolution is this murderous under-thing which also steals the holy name of revolution. How can we ever keep it clear from the other? How can you do it, Dana, when Ifreann has planted so many things in your bemused skull?"

"He went off more bemused than ourselves. Let him shout to all the little Germanies! Someone will shove in the green-juice timbers to shore up the structure in the Germanies also. Will you be in Paris, Catherine, when it heats up here again?"

"I will be here through March and April and most of May. I'll be gone in June."

"But June is when the fun will happen."

"No. It isn't fun. Your two devils, the Elena and the Ifreann, have given you the false bit about Merry Murder and Merry Hell. It isn't merry, and they aren't. They're hysterical."

"Elena Prado, I think it, I have dreamed it, is one-eyed now and her face all scar tissue. But she is still snaky-triumphant, and she is still merry."

"No, she isn't. I am, though. It keeps breaking out in me no matter what. I want to shout and dance on roofs. Oh, life and death can be merry enough; they are to me. They aren't to them."

Charley Oceaan stopped by their table and sat with them. He talked thoughtfully:

"It isn't certain that I will see you again in Paris, Dana," he said, "though I will be here for quite a while. And it isn't certain that I will ever see you again in this world, Catherine. Dana, I make appointment with you now: meet me in Amsterdam on the very first day of next year. You will need me then, Dana. You will be in a bleak time of it. We'll go off to another part of the world, to another world that has only half a sky over it. Catherine, I also make appointment with you, but I cannot tell the time or place of it, nor which world it will be in."

"Ah, we'll both keep our appointments with you, Charley," Catherine told him.

They were drinking sour sauterne and eating little fishcakes. It must have been for penance; there were better things to eat and drink there. They were all keeping a penitential lenten-time that spring.

"Where are you going in June, Catherine?" Dana asked.

"I am going to Praha, which the French and the English call Prague. I have Slavic business there. And also, as is fitting, I will carry to Bohemia and Moravia the Green Scapular of Saint Cyril. That is where he worked, you know, and where he planted his green branch."

Persons who have heard of all the known seventeen small scapulars may still be ignorant of the Green Scapular of Saint Cyril. It was a private sign, and it was worn by only six persons in the world: Dana Coscuin, Kemper Gruenland, Tancredi Cima, Mariella Cima, Catherine Dembinska, Charley Oceaan. It had been devised by Dana and sewn by Catherine.

The nineteenth century was the scapular century. The original scapular was the sleeveless monks' robe falling down from the shoulders, the *scapulae*. This was the large scapular, differing in the various orders. Then certain lay persons, about the time of the Crusades, adopted the small scapular worn under the shirt: two small squares of wool cloth with images figured on them and

joined by two wool bands going over the shoulders. Thus the lay people could also be robed in Christ.

But it was in the nineteenth century that this insigne appeared in a rich variety of forms. All the members of the Company had already worn a scapular, Charley Oceaan the White Scapular of Our Lady of Ransom, Dana and Kemper the Brown Scapular of Mount Carmel (the best known of all of them), Catherine the Blue Scapular of the Immaculate Conception, Tancredi and Mariella the Red Scapular of the Passion (the Lazarist Scapular). Bad people as well as good wore the scapulars. The murderous and now blinded Jude Revanche also wore the Red Scapular of the Passion, this on the word of Kemper Gruenland who had traveled with him. It was even said that the devilish Ifreann Chortovitch wore the Red Passion Scapular, or some sort of burlesque of it.

"Is it in Prague that I will meet you again?" Dana asked Catherine.

"I don't think so. It will probably be in my own Krakow. Even that Devil's son promised you excellent shooting in the Eastern Marches the coming autumn. It will be in the Eastern Marches: but I hope without hope that we may be spared the shooting. I myself will never shoot again in my life, though I will teach you to fence, Dana."

"Certainly it is better to shoot sometimes, than to wait and be killed like a sheep," Dana argued.

"For me, no, not any longer, Dana," Catherine said. "Me, I will wait, and I will be killed like a sheep. That isn't the way I used to be, but that is the way I will be now."

"How would you teach me to fence?"

"I will teach you because you do not know how. All you know is the little hand knife. You do not know the sword or the saber or the rapier, weapons that every gentleman should know. I myself am the best swordswoman in Europe. It was my own late father who stated that I was. I'll not be involved in killing again, though, and I wish there were some way where neither of you would be involved in it."

"Yes, my own conscience groans pretty heavily with it lately," Charley Oceaan told them. "But someone may have to do it, and who am I to deserve clean hands? A very small bit of selective assassination, done by myself and a few others, has already saved an enormous amount of bloodshed."

"Well, it is no longer right for me, and it may soon be no longer right for you," Catherine argued. "I have heard, though I do not entirely credit it, that slight and selective assassination has always been part of the program of Count Cyril. I know it was the

program of Christian Blaye. I know it is still the program of Malandrino Brume. And it will remain the life and the love of Tancredi and Mariella. My own father indulged in it. So did I. I've been a bloodier girl than you might guess. My own call is changed now."

"And when the Instigators gather again and devise bloodshed and blight against the growth, what do we do then?" Dana asked. "We are so small a company, we *must* chop them down first."

"I do what I do. You do what you do," Catherine said. "The play is moving so fast that even in these lull days I can't adjust to it. It is the last act and the next to the last scene, for me, not for you two."

On several following days, Catherine did teach Dana to fence. They fenced in a private room in a fencing academy. Dana learned the foils, the rapiers, the swords, the sabers. He also learned the etiquette of such things. Dana would never be a gentleman, but he would be picking up such gentlemanly tricks all his life.

"What do you really believe in, Catherine?" Dana asked after the fencing one day.

"Oh, I believe in God in his Heaven and in the Revolution on Earth."

"That is all?"

"What else is there?"

"And the Revolution is that important to you?"

"Oh, the Revolution is the World. It is the bound duty of every one of us. It is the constant conversion, the ananeosis, the renewal, the aborning again. Curse all heretics who use words to mean their opposites! The Holy Revolution is all the green-growth and its sacralizing. It isn't *their* bloody and obstructing blight. They blaspheme!"

That the Green Revolution might be allowed to flourish without blight, that was the hope. There was real hope in Paris that late winter. It had all been so gentle in Paris, and the echo through all France had been a gentle one.

France had already had an extremely permissive government: hardly any other place had. France had already achieved very many of the reforms, and now the gate was open for all of them. Paris would lead the world.

"But the three-day farce was the last performance of Paris as center and leader of the world," Catherine said. "Now the world hasn't any center. Oh, oh, oh, but look what giant waves those last three tossed pebbles are causing."

The three farcical February days in Paris, with their pale, token bloodshed, had shaken the whole world unaccountably. How

could that little popgun thing have passed itself off as an explosion, how could its reverberations have set off such cannonades? How was it possible that it fooled the very elementals so as to echo around the world in thunder-clap after thunder-clap as if the whole sky were breaking open? How could three gnats' bites have sent whole multitudes of elephants trumpeting and charging in such terror?

The news of the Paris events had traveled with instantaneous electrical speed to such places as the telegraph went, though the telegraph went only to select places. This was only four years after Morse's first public transmission, between Washington and Baltimore over in America, and it was the first case of instant effect and amplification of an event. The news had reached most European capitals at once.

In other parts of the world, and in more local portions of Europe, the news seemed to arrive as a shock wave, not understood at all, but with a power many times amplified.

In Uruguay there were renewed battles between the Whites and the Reds. No need to say that such events were unrelated to events in Europe: they were exact reflections of European events.

In Argentina, the Rosas and anti-Rosas forces were at war; and small French forces, supporting the anti-Rosas forces on Martin Garcia Island and other places, suddenly weakened and began to withdraw, feeling without having heard it that France was withdrawing from all such interventions.

In Brazil there was the Pernambuco uprising against the Emperor Pedro II. And in Chile, Mexico and Paraguay there were sudden clashes, all of these coming violently and at the same time. But there was no telegraph under the Atlantic yet.

There were riots in Vienna on March 13, more violent but less storied than those in Paris.

There was fighting at the barricades in Berlin on March 18.

There was street fighting in Milan on March 18 and 19. This was the beginning of something that would hardly be solved in twenty years.

On March 29, our old friend Charles Albert the King of Sardinia and Savoy began his attack on the Austrians who were entwined through all North Italy. So there were to be national revolutions as well as social revolutions. The blight would settle on the national revolutions as well, but essentially the national revolts were always a part of the Green Revolution.

"Italy, Poland, Ireland," Catherine Dembinska said once, "the three slave nations. So long as there is one Austrian soldier in

Italy, so long as there is one Russian soldier in Poland, so long as there is one English soldier in Ireland, there cannot be peace anywhere in the world."

Three days in February, the splash of three small pebbles had sent waves around the world. And, having completed their circuit of the earth, the waves, now towering and rather horrible, returned in June and swept over Paris and France.

Catherine Dembinska was gone by then. She left without any word at all, except her vague statements of several months before. Dana had only the cloudy promise that they would meet, and marry, in the East before the year was completed. The Slav Congress was to begin June 2 in Prague, and Catherine must have allowed herself at least a month's travel time.

Catherine Dembinska gone from Paris. And Malandrino and Magdalena Brume arrived in Paris right at the beginning of June. It was a new scene with a new flavor to it.

Actually the Brumes had arrived in Paris before June, but they had not declared themselves to Dana. Their arrival was tied in with an event called the 'Resurrection of France,' which was not a very important event. It took place on Resurrection Day which was Easter Sunday, April 23. This was the day of the great elections, with universal suffrage for the first time in France. The French people elected a mediocre group of delegates. The right wingers got five hundred seats, the left wingers less than a hundred. The Legitimists, who favored the return of the old Bourbon line, got about a hundred; the Orléanists, in favor of Louis Philippe who had been thrown out two months before, got about two hundred.

The newly elected delegates were to replace, legitimize, or work with the provisional government which had come in two months before and which had been falling to pieces. The new delegates might even draw up a constitution. They were really provisional delegates to expand the narrow provisional government. Later elections and later troubles were already planned.

But one of the elected delegates was Malandrino Brume. This rough mountain man, who was actually a citizen of Rome, had been elected from a district of Gascony of south France. Well and good: Brume had filled several roles; he could as easily be a member of the government while doing other things.

Dana learned only gradually that the Brumes were in Paris, and at first he doubted that they were the same Brumes. At his first attempt he did not get to see rough Malandrino Brume at all, but he did see Magdalena.

"He is busy on certain work, Dana, and I am sure that you are

also. Very soon you will work together for a while, and then separate for a much longer while. You have not come to realize it yet, but it is very lonely and dry work most of the time that you are called to do. There will be a year at a time, maybe two years, that you will not meet anybody who has been associated with you in the revolution. You will go by instinct in the dark, and you will very often go wrong. There is, by the way, a man who insists on meeting you in the dark, and you will go very wrong whichever way you go. It will be wrong to refuse to meet him. It will be horribly wrong to meet him. You will lose your life in that encounter, or you will lose your reputation. But there isn't any way you can avoid the sad thing. I've come to tell you that this man insists on meeting you in the dark."

"Who insists on meeting me in the dark, my mountain saint? Do you know, Magdalena, that there is nobody like you at all? You are almost the thing perfect. I shine whenever you are near."

"Of course you do. You are really no person at all, Dana; you're nought but a fair-haired reflecting emerald. You reflect whatever woman is near, and only this gives you your person, your self. You were a spirited person when you reflected Elena Prado that Tancredi finally blasted (I know that story); and when you reflected Mariella of the Mountains; when you reflected Catherine (her more than any); or her friend Elaine Kingsberry; or the Aileen in Ireland (I know that story too); and you are particularly spirited and lively when you reflect me. Really, Dana, I believe that I do more for you than any of them. But you are nothing without the light of your women."

"You are wrong, Magdalena. I see it now. Kemper told it to me without understanding it himself. I am my full self. The light is provided to me, yes: but the women (except Catherine) are all the same woman. When I say you are the thing perfect I mean that you are the thing plain. There is only the one woman and you are the clear image of her. Even the Greeks knew that there was only one. Even big Kemper knew it. They both had the same mistiness about the poem of the Maid Helen. But she is simply the world-woman who is every woman (except Catherine)."

"I have never heard of this Maid Helen," Magdalena said.

"Maid Helen. *Magd Elena*."

"I have never heard of Magd Elena either," said Magdalena, but she grinned.

"Oh, it is all the one woman, the Helen, Ellen, Ella. Aileen, Elena, Elaine, Mariella (who is Marry Ella or Mary Helen), Magdalena. Really, there has been only one woman in the world, except Catherine."

"How about the first woman in the world, Eve? Turn her into Helen, Dana, or shrivel your Irish tongue in your mouth."

"Oh, her real name has always been Eveline, which is Eve-Helen. Yes, there is only one woman in the world, and she is a prototype and not a person. Except Catherine."

"This Catherine, Dana, she told you that Ifreann the Son of the Devil was half Irish. Consider that Catherine herself may be half Irish and her real name may be Kathelene. That can be Cat-Helen, or Battle-Helen, or Down-Helen. There are any number of Helens who can be made from your Catherine. But you only shine by borrowed light, Dana."

"Oh well, and what man is it who wants to meet me in the dark?"

"Jude Revanche whom you blinded. The challenge is to fight him to the death with short knives in the total dark."

"I lose either way, do I, Magdalena? Only a coward would kill a blind man, and only a coward would run from one. And only a fool would fight one in the dark. What day will it be?"

"He says that you will be advised of the day. May you tremble in the meanwhile, he says."

Then, in an early day of June, Dana met, and hardly knew, Malandrino Brume. This was not rough Brume now. He was a dandy, but a powerful one. He was a top-hatted, frock-tailed, trouser-spatted dude out of a Daumier drawing. The Daumier dudes, however, sometimes have a self-burlesque element in them.

"Ah, you are a puff-ball, a mannish lady, a less than Englishman even, a *mollason*," Dana jeered him. "Where is the rough Brume I knew?"

"Try me, boy Dana. Ah, you are almost a man now. You drank the Devil under the table, and you felled big Kemper—in your second go at him. Do not forget, though, who taught you the tricks for both victories. Yes, I am in masquerade as a gentlemen. Who would recognize me in this? To work now, Dana. We make portentous visits to two or more men tonight."

"No we do not, Brume. I am cloyed of the smell of blood. I am convinced that your way is all wrong. I've had enough of this killing to prevent killing."

"Kill? Why should we have to kill, Dana? Having to kill is always an admission of weakness, of partial failure. This evening, you and I will go out and terrify several men. We will terrify one man into doing nothing, and another man into doing something. I hope we will not be so inept or unsuccessful as to have to kill any

of them."

"All right. We will try it. Brume, do you know where Charley Oceaan is. But I forget—you do not know him."

"But I do know him, Dana. He is here in Paris and he is occupied. He works alone for a while. You will often have to do the same."

"Brume, I was recruited blind into some form of half-military service. But my pay has been irregular—"

"Good, though, Dana."

"—and I have never received any orders of any kind—or none that I could understand. I do not know who my commander is; I do not know where I am supposed to go or what I am supposed to do. Everything I touch is a failure, and I am left to wander loose. Secrecy may sometimes be necessary in a military operation, but when it is so extreme it makes a low comedy of it all. Brume, what am I really supposed to do?"

"You are supposed to ask yourself that question often; and you are supposed to listen closely to your own answers. It will be given to you what to do."

"Brume, have you ever seen the Count Cyril?"

"How should I know? But the Count Cyril has seen me. And I am one of the very few who has received writing in his own hand."

"You have no idea what he looks like?"

"The third man we visit tonight, Dana, look at him. I am told that there is some resemblance there. This man is rumored to be either a kinsman or an ancestor of the Count Cyril."

"An ancestor?"

Dana Coscuin and Malandrino Brume terrified two men that night, and amused a third. But they did not kill any of them; they were not so unsuccessful as that.

Brume was in admiration of Dana's agility on the roofs. Brume, who had been a mountain man, could climb anything; yet he hadn't Dana's lightness and speed on the roofs. Brume also admired Dana's mastery of locks and bolts. Brume himself had always forced windows with a burglar's jimmy and broken doors with a sort of crampon. He hadn't the art of sliding tumblers and bolts with a thin piece of parchment or with a piece of watch spring. But Dana had been to school both to Malandrino Brume and to Catherine Dembinska.

One man, at whose place they made strange entry, took quite a bit of terrifying before he promised not to do a certain thing. He had his own stubborn streak in him. He was a colleague of Brume's in the parliament. He swore that he would denounce Brume in that parliament and everywhere in Paris and France.

Brume said that he would not feel natural if he were not widely denounced. There was a low and peculiar sound, a muffled breaking.

The man also demanded, in a very tight and rasping voice, why Brume and his pup had made strange entry instead of coming to the front door like proper visitors.

"I did not know that the man who machinated and gave dark counsel was the same man who sat with me in the parliament," Brume said. "You have too many faces and persons in you. I will have to cause one of them some pain, but I do hope it will not be the person of my friend in the chamber." And Brume broke another of the man's fingers as casually as he might break a bit of bread.

The man moaned (he had a low pain threshold), but he was still stubborn. Then the man suffered further digital fracture and became faint. He also became quite afraid of Dana Coscuin who had made no move at all. Dana had learned certain spooky tricks from Ifreann, from Tancredi, from Charley Oceaan; moreover he had a fair-eyed weirdness of his own. The man began to shake from his pain and faintness and fear. He pledged not to do the certain thing that Brume was concerned with. Would he keep his promise? Brume said that he would send a doctor around to care for the fingers that had been unfortunately and accidentally broken. And they left the man there.

The man of the second visitation was already fainthearted. That had been the trouble with him all the while. Brume was intent on forcing the man to take a certain action, and the man had already shown himself almost incapable of any action. But he was a strategically placed man and it was important that he should take the action. Brume and Dana terrified him. They obtained his faint promise that he would act. And he would act, if he was capable of it. They left him.

And the third man was not at home. Dana felt some relief at this. An aura had been building up about the very idea of this man about whom Dana knew nothing at all. The anticipation had been both pleasant and fearful. Dana and Brume made an extraordinary entry, and they went through the establishment pretty thoroughly. It was a lived-in but undocumented house. The third man kept his things elsewhere, or he kept them in his head. They left the place.

They went to a stall among the night markets and had oysters and pink wine. Neither of them had the money to pay. Dana snapped his fingers softly and grinned. Which one would it be? It

was a fish wife who came to them wiping her hands on her apron. "From the Count Cyril," she said and gave Dana a little packet. "Thank you both," Dana said. From the packet he paid for the oysters and wine, receiving quite a bit of silver in return for his coin.

Then Brume brought Dana to the Brume household.

"Magdalena is out of the city on her own bright business tonight," Brume said. "Here is my house, Dana, and here is a challenge for you. Try to enter the house in any way whatsoever. See if you can solve even one lock here; see if you can find any weak place anywhere. You cannot. Nobody can break into my house."

Dana tried it, out of sheer sport, for nearly an hour. He could not effect any entry whatsoever. Brume then opened the combinations of locks and heavy bolts, and they went in. They went down into the cellar of the house to a specially locked and bolted room. Brume opened it up, and they went in and lit a lamp.

But there was a man already in the room, laughing at them with his eyes. Dana felt Brume tremble, but he talked calmly.

"This is the third man, Dana," Brume said. "He was absent from his house when we visited him. And now he has come to my own house very oddly."

Who did this third man remind one of? To Dana he looked a little bit like Brume himself, a little bit like the Black Pope back in the Carlist Hills, a little bit like Christian Blaye, as he might have looked with flesh on his skull.

To Brume the man looked the little bit like young Dana here; a bit like other men that Brume had known; a puzzling bit like the idea of a man that Brume had been carrying around with him.

The man had an amused and intricate face, moving hands that were like kindly serpents, a complex and remembered voice. The man had been talking from the time that Brume and Dana had entered, talking intently but with a timeless cheerfulness, putting words together like pieces of aromatic wood to form a coffer or ark.

"He looks very much like Catherine's late father," Dana said to himself.

"So much so that, had she not told me for sure that he was dead, I would swear that he was the same man." Then Dana shivered a bit as he recalled that he had never seen Catherine's father alive or dead, that he had never seen any picture of him, that Catherine had never described his appearance at all.

"Whyever should you have sought me out at my house, Malandrino?" (These were not the actual words of the man; they

were an impression left behind by the words. The words themselves are unrecorded and unremembered; there seems an obstacle to recalling the words themselves.) "It is only a very temporary house of mine in any case. You wondered just who I was who meddled at second and third hand, and you decided to have a talk with me. Malandrino, it is I who decide when it is time to have a talk.

"What we are trying to do, Malandrino and Dana, cannot well be put into words other than the original words of it in the Gospel. And does it not sometimes seem that we do not adhere closely to the Gospels? The same parts are not given to everyone. Each does what he is able to do. There are many strange parables in Scripture, and we live out one of the most puzzling of them."

The man looked a little bit, Malandrino Brume mused, like Pius VII (Pio Settimo, Barnabas Chiaramonti) who had been Pope during Brume's Roman childhood. He looked smarter than that dead Barnabas—like one who would not so often have been outsmarted by the fox Napoleon.

"We plant and we cultivate as well as we may," (it was the impression that the man was saying this) "and we weed. It is more than a myth that every weed is a dragon's tooth in disguise. We pull such fangs as we can. Yet one who might consider from the short future the three days of horrible blood that are almost upon us could well ask 'What ultimate horror might this have been if it were not de-fanged?' Most horrible of all is that there will be little reason for it, only that the peoples' own governments were not able to deliver quickly enough such things as the people wanted but could not yet formulate.

" 'Hell was not built in one day,' is an old saying, and those who work for its erection and sustaining work without ceasing. So must those of us who countervail it. It is such slow, though often rewarding work, that we can hardly see any progress in one lifetime; and only a few are given more than one lifetime to devote to it."

That man talked to them a very long time, or so it seemed. Much of it went directly to the substrata of their minds and memories; only hazy bits of it remained on the surface. Brume and Dana both became very sleepy, not from lack of interest, from some humorous trick that the man was playing on them. It was as if there was something here too rich to be understood at one sitting. After a long while of it, there was something about the man rising to go (he had some signs of great age about him, the backs of his hands, the sunkenness of his cheeks; and some signs of quick youth, his full throat, his eyes, his easy movements); there was

something about him saying that he would let himself out, that Brume and Dana could rest easy (they were not hosts, *he* was host); there was something about the man being gone then.

When it seemed time for morning, Dana woke in his chair and left that house. Brume was sleeping too deeply to be bothered. Dana went to the house where they had first looked for that man the night before. Dana again made extraordinary entry, a more tricky thing by daylight, but the house was not the same as it had been the previous night. It was the same house; some furnishings were still there, but it simply was not a lived-in house now, and did not seem to have been for some time.

Dana went back to Brume's, and Brume was gone. All day he searched for that Third Man, or for Brume. It was right at dark that evening that he found Brume.

"Have you any idea where that man can be found?" Dana demanded hastily.

"None," Brume said. "He is never found. He finds. Don't push it, Dana."

"Brume, do you know who that man was?"

"I do not. I guess who you guess it might have been. I believe you guess wrong. You can't find him, Dana. Give it up."

"Brume, I *will* find him. That's all that matters now. You talk straight. You said, before we visited him, that the man was either a kinsman or an ancestor. I believe that he was the man himself. Now, what do you know?"

"I know that my house was reputed to be haunted when I rented it, Dana. And I believe that we have seen the haunt, no more than that. I also believe that we were deceived by the house we visited a little earlier. That house had not recently been occupied, but somehow it seemed to us that it had been. We encountered a known haunt, one who leaves on all the impression of great profundity and wisdom without actually conveying either. These things do happen. We live in a paranormal world, and there is no normal counterpart to it; often, people have difficulty in understanding this."

"I have difficulty in understanding you, Brume. Was your haunt an ancestor of Count Cyril?"

"Yes, a reputed ancestor of the reputed count. Nobody knows very much about either. Get some sleep tonight, Dana. The blood-gates burst open tomorrow."

"Brume, I will find that man if I have to go to the ends of the earth to do it."

"As good an excuse as any, Dana. A young man who has not gone to the ends of the earth has been young in vain."

"Brume, I will find him." Dana left Brume and went out looking for a face and a form. He would scrutinize every face and form in the world till he found the one he looked for. He seemed to be bumping into many people in his hurry. He had no system in his search. There was no longer any division into hours. There was only frantic hurrying to examine every face in the world.

"There is no face in the world, except Catherine's, that I would rather see," Dana Coscuin was saying out loud. "I have the promise from her, but I let this man get away with no promise at all."

Dana bumped into a group of rough men, and they grappled with him.

"Come along to your death," one of them said.

"He is waiting," said another. "He says that now is the time."

"It is damned if you do and damned if you don't," said another man.

Dana felled three of the men in sudden anger. The rest drew back a little, but were ready to overwhelm him.

"There's a lack of understanding here," Dana told them all loudly. "Speak to me civilly. What do you want?"

"You go to fight blind Revanche now," said one of the men.

"In a blind dark room," said another.

"To the death," said still another.

"All right, let us get it over with then," Dana told them. "Jude Revanche is wrong and there is no way that I can set him right. And there is no way that I can die till I find that face. We go."

It was a peculiar inner building they came to then. It was dark enough, and the men were finding means of making it darker. One of them said that it was a pit where men had used to put dogs to fight each other to death for bets and spectacle. Someone was putting a blindfold on Dana.

"For what?" he asked them, "if it will be blind dark anyhow?"

"Lest you cheat a little on the coming or going," they said. "And now we search you."

"Nobody searches me," Dana maintained. "Lay off, or there will be more dead men than one here." He was not searched. But he was given a short sharp knife ("Revanche has one exactly like it") and he was brought down into a pit that had an earthen floor. There were three men who brought him in there, but Dana picked out the breathing of the fourth man, Revanche. Dana was tall-eared now, needing every advantage he could find. He had more important things to do than to die there.

"The victor will cry three times like a raven," one of the men said. "Then we will open up again." Dana heard the door close. He

heard certain other business about the door, apparently muffling being put into place.

The pit itself was very small, not eight feet across if Dana could judge by the tone and echo of Revanche's breathing. Two men or two dogs could not long escape each other in it. There was larger spreading space above; there was also a grill-work or bar-work of iron above.

Two men trying to hold their breaths, to give no indication of their presence in the total dark. Evenly matched as to weapons, though Dana had refused to be searched, and both blind in the dark.

"His is no great advantage over me," Dana reasoned. "He has been a blind man for only short months, and I have been a night man (hunting and fishing, and then manhunting) for a long time. I'm almost as good a blind man as he is. And they gave me, without meaning to do it, one weapon they forgot to give him, a blindfold."

The blindfold was a long and strong kerchief. It would make a good loop, a garrote. Dana knew how to kill a man in the dark with a garrote like that, quicker and easier than with a knife. With the end knotted the scarf made a good swinging probe to locate the silent Jude. There had been a queer sigh from Jude Revanche just about the time the door closed, and then no more.

Dana, warily crouched and knife ready, probed the dark with the swinging scarf. He reached every wall with it, but he did not reach Jude Revanche. He probed along the earthen floor with his feet, having slid free from his sandals. He found new mud, and then he found the body. He had the candle stub out of his hat (he had not permitted himself to be searched), and he lighted it.

Jude Revanche was dead with a knife in his throat. That twisted man had either killed himself, or there had been consummate trickery. Jude was shrunken from his former self. He was wasted, and not at all fearsome. He had a quite different look in his face than Dana had expected. There was great fear there, something that was almost compassion, something that was almost (was this possible?) peace. An added look to Jude that puzzlingly reminded Dana of someone he knew.

Had Jude been led there blind for bait? Had he been killed by one of the rough men, just before the door was closed, and while Dana still wore the blindfold? The curious sigh had been just about at that time. Had Jude killed himself, for twisted revenge or for twisted repentance? Had Jude ever sent any challenge at all? He must have, for Magdalena Brume had carried that first challenge and there was no possibility of trickery in Magdalena.

But had he sent that night's challenge? Or had others reported it to bring Dana to the struggle that he could not win?

Dana affixed his candle-stub to the belt-clasp of Jude Revanche who lay on his back dead. Then Dana sounded three times, but not the sound of the raven. He gave the mournful moan of the Irish loon, three times, loud and long. The men opened the door. It was a striking presentation that they opened it on.

"You struck a light!" they cried furiously. There were more men there than they had been. Called witnesses.

"I struck a light," Dana said.

"You struck a light and murdered the blind man by it!"

"I struck a light, and the blind man is dead."

"There's the sign of Cain on you!"

They drew back from Dana, perhaps in horror, perhaps in pretended horror, more likely because Dana had a knife in his hand yet and it flashed in the candlelight. He looked as though he'd use it, and they let him through.

"There will be a thousand blades after you by morning," they called after him.

"Let them be after me then," said Dana.

"It will be said everywhere that you struck a light and murdered a blind man by it," they called.

"Let it be said then," Dana called back. "There is no way to win a battle with a blind man."

But to himself he said, "That last look on Jude's face, I know now who it reminded me of. It was partly the look of the face of the Third Man. I must go on till I see all of that face again."

Dana wandered, intense and distraught. He hadn't been defeated too badly in the battle with blind Jude Revanche. He had other things to consider than what might be said of him, and it was only those said things that could hurt him. He looked at faces, faces. The sun came up on June 23, the first of the three days of the bloodiest street fighting ever seen in Europe.

There were the barricades, and there were the prodigies reported on the barricades. One of the prodigies of the barricades was Dana Coscuin who had the mark of Cain on him now and who could not be killed. He went conspicuous in green shirt and he took no cover at all. It is said that a dozen shots were fired at him and none harmed him. That is possible. There was some remarkably bad shooting on the barricades. It is also said that a hundred blades were thrust through him and none harmed him, but this is to be doubted.

It was a three-day delirium of bloodshed there. "What ultimate horror would this have been if it had not been de-fanged?" the

Third Man had asked. But Dana Coscuin was spared part of that horror (hardly anyone else in Paris was spared it) in that he walked in an intent daze still looking for the face of the third man. He had done all he could do here in any case. He had pulled some of the teeth. He had chopped some of the weeds. And he would continue to plant and to cultivate. But nobody short of God would have been able to halt that three-day red rain.

Dana wandered out of Paris before the third day was finished. And he continued to wander, over France, over Europe, looking for the face, or what the face stood for. As Brume had suggested, he asked himself one question often, and he listened intently for his own answer. It was not, in those months, given to him what he should do.

Dana wandered from June to November, in and out of Spain, in and out of Italy, through the Germanies, into Vienna and Prague. And in November he came to Poland.

XII

ONE MORE DAY UNTIL THE SKY FALLS DOWN

Since 1772 there had been little independence in Poland. The country had been occupied by Prussian, Austrian, and Russian forces.

In the time of Napoleon, however, between the years 1807 and 1815, an independent Grand-Duchy of Warsaw was created. This could last only as long as Napoleon lasted. The Polish Legions, composed of Polish emigrants from their occupied homeland, had fought for Napoleon against all three of the occupying nations. In the creation of the independent Grand-Duchy of Warsaw, they were paid for their bloody labor. And, at the Congress of Vienna, they were paid for it again, in the reverse direction, by their three old enemies.

After the Congress of Vienna in 1815, Russia had occupied more than two-thirds of Poland. This was called Russian Poland, or Congress Poland, or Crown Poland. But there were pieces of old Poland outside this. The Posen district belonged to Prussia; the Galicia district belonged to Austria. But the City of Krakow, with a little bit of surrounding territory, was made independent, a very small state at the conjunction of the three Imperiums.

It was in the Free State of Krakow that Ifreann Chortovitch the Son of the Devil was born. It was here also that Catherine Dembinska was born.

Krakow was a pretty small freedom candle burning in the Eastern Marches, and it was a center of intrigue. The intriguers were mostly the Polish refugees from Prussian and Austrian and Russian Poland but also refugees of many other races from the Prussian and Austrian and Russian Empires. The crowding of the refugees always kept Krakow very poor, so the place was not entirely free. And the intrigues were a little grandiose and top-heavy; so they sometimes toppled the town and its territory.

There had been scheduled for February of 1846 an uprising against the three occupying powers of all territories that had been Polish. The plans of this uprising were betrayed, totally and in

complete detail, in all the regions involved. They had been betrayed by Information Men working out of Krakow. And the insurgents had their heads knocked off everywhere they raised them.

The manifesto of the insurrections had been published for all Poland in Krakow, so the Austrians came and extinguished free Krakow, blew the candle out. This was only two years before the time we are speaking of.

The Austrian method had been to incite the peasants against the insurgent leaders of Poland, to offer a bounty for every corpse produced and for every residence burned. This produced the massacre of two thousand 'lords', the Polish-blood landlords of Austrian Poland. The Austrian-blood and German-blood landlords were not massacred, and many of the massacring peasants were not peasants at all but mercenary forces imported for the task. There were many cases of the genuine peasants defending their lords from the masquerade peasants.

But it had its bright side. An emancipation that had long been proposed was finally effected. It was stated that this was in repayment to the peasants who had revolted against the revolt: Austria abolished serfdom in Galicia and all of Polish Austria. Even the serfs of the Austrian-blood and the German-blood lords were freed, and there was some loud grumbling that this had not been the intent at all. This was in April of 1848, the year we are traversing.

The only serfdom left in Europe now was in Russia herself and in the somewhat more than two-thirds of Poland that was Russian-occupied.

But no-longer-free Krakow was still a center of intrigue, was still plotting for another uprising of all the Polands for that 1848, just two years after the last dismal defeats. And the same, or nearly the same Information Men were eager to betray all the details of this new insurrection also.

Dana Coscuin had been wandering in an odd manner for five months when he came to Poland in November of 1848. Let it be emphasized here that Dana was a young man in the prime of his sanity. There are certain heavy elements of delirium in these wanderings, but the delirium was not in Dana; it was in the scene and the times.

They were demented months in a demented world. The coherence was all gone out of it. It was not consequential. There were things to be seen in those times which are not usually seen or usually admitted as being seen, although everybody was very good natured about it all. Even in the bloody businesses there was

this element of good nature. People foresaw in pieces, they understood in shaggy selections, and they accepted with good grace.

There was much breaching of the walls between the material and the immaterial. It was as if the graves were opened and many who had been asleep had arisen. They were more fools than saints who arose, however. Yet they were happy fools, and that is nearly the same thing as saints. It was the summer of the Resurrection of the Fools, and all the roads of Europe were clogged with them.

There was a difficulty about some of the persons who were met, the discerning whether they were quick or dead. There was Jude Revanche that Dana met for an hour one afternoon. This was on the road from Carcassonne to Narbonne in South France. Jude was not then blind, but he was purblind. He complained that the weakness of his eyes handicapped him in falconing and fowling. They talked about falconing and fowling of which Dana had done much in Ireland and Jude in Sardinia. They did not talk about the conflict that had been between the two of them.

Jude was of the opinion (it was more than just opinion, since Dana had heard the same thing from other persons; it was fact) that all the roads to Purgatory were overcrowded and stopped from the unprecedented numbers of persons dying and going there that summer. Some souls of his acquaintance had been waiting a way to go for as long as three months, he said. And others were told that if they could find a way of their own they were permitted to use it. This particular road, from Carcassonne to Narbonne, was not one of the proper roads to Purgatory, Jude said; but beyond Narbonne, and just short of Coursan, he believed that a Purgatory road might be found.

He wasn't a bad fellow. Dana was glad that he was going to Purgatory and not to Hell. Jude was glad of it also. Some souls of his acquaintance were having to wait as long as three years for an open road to Hell.

There was the morning that Dana saw the whole fair landscape from horizon to horizon and realized that it was all on the inside of one very large soap-bubble. He saw then, beyond and dwarfing it all, the pipe that was blowing the whole bubble, and the face that was blowing the pipe. The wide world was quite small in comparison to that face. It was the face of a rather lack-eyed monster, somehow like an old Irish bummer, a little like that of one of the Other People who live under the hills. "Be careful, you'll break it if you puff any more into it." "I always break them," said the monstrous face. "I wish I could keep one of them sometime."

There was another morning that Dana had breakfast with the Pope. This was not in Rome but in the smaller town of Gaeta in the hotel named Giardinetto. The other tables were filled, but this man had a table to himself and men stood and waited on him. Dana sat down with him and told him that he was the Count of Kerry. The man said that he was the Pope of Rome.

"Do you believe that Rossi will be murdered?" the Pope asked Dana.

"Assuredly," said Dana who did not know who Rossi was. "Why should he remain unmurdered when better men than he is are murdered every day?"

"As vicar of Christ I have great difficulty in receiving communication from Christ," the Pope complained. "In all the hard things I am left to my own wits."

"I have the same difficulty in receiving communication from the Count Cyril Prasinos," Dana said.

"Oh, him! A witty man, surely, and a pleasant one, but some of his solutions are a little *exterus*, how would you say it?—outside the lines."

Actually Dana was experiencing a crisis, but experiencing it quite sanely, such as often comes to young men who go into the blood-spilling business and then hear nothing but a great silence when they expect either explicit orders or commendation.

"It's as though God and the Count Cyril had both washed their hands of me," Dana said.

Dana met Elena Prado selling fish in Magdeburg. ("What is that little brown-skin doing up here in the Germanies?" Dana asked himself.) She was one-eyed and bent, and her face was entirely of scar tissue. But she was lively, she was stubborn, she was lustful, she was snaky-triumphant. After a queer congress with her, Dana asked her if she were really alive.

"I will tell you this, Dana," she said in her newer and rougher voice (she may have had scar tissue on her inner throat also), "if I am dead, I have not been dead as long as some of my fish here. Are there any fish of Ireland that speak with such authority? I will sell them yet, though. I will sell them to people without noses."

Dana met Kemper Gruenland somewhere in the minor Germanies. There was no question but that this was Kemper, alive, and in the health of his flesh; though he had a long and stark face-scar which now made him look older.

"You are more than a brother to me, you Irish scoundrel," Kemper said with a real friendliness and no reserve at all, "but

you will never be elder brother to me now. I have aged several years in these short months, and you have been allowed to stand outside it. It has eaten me too, Dana, and I've had to muck my way through all the heavy earth of Germany. You have been permitted a wuestewandering, a wilderness-wandering, a desert-wandering. It's a thing that refreshes also while it tires and burns. But it takes you to the top of the hill and permits you to see all sides; you will remember those other landscapes even if you do not know what to do about them as yet. But I have had to trudge this low-lying road all the time. I'm not holy enough to have been given a wilderness-wandering and a recess for my wits."

"Should we not have at least as much time in each other's company as—"

"As we had in the company of the Son of the Devil, Dana? We should have and we will. A night and a day and another night of it, and maybe a bit more. It may not be as noisy or as vile as the Devil's go with us, but it will be as hearty, and more pleasant."

They spent the most of two nights and two days in each other's company. It was hearty and very friendly, and ultimately it might prove a very memorable time. Kemper Gruenland had a number of friends of the irregular soldierly sort who had been working the German countryside. They drank and ate and rode horses. They talked profoundly, even if in barracks accents. They were all working that Germany of the heavy soil should be as green a land as any ever. There was a solidness of tactics with them, such as had been found only in the Carlist Hills of Spain, and such as had not been found in France or as yet in Italy.

"Germany is the giant who has been hacked into one thousand pieces by the malicious trickster," one of Kemper's huge friends said. "Our hope is to put the poor giant together again and make him again a living person. Our fear is that he may have become so bad-natured and savage of mind from his having been chopped to pieces that he will be a danger to the world. It's a real fear, and we are real men in asking what is the right and the wrong of the things we are doing and the way we are doing them."

Kemper repeated to Dana, just before Dana took his leave from him, that all members of the Company were to meet with Charley Ocean in Amsterdam on the first day of the next year. Kemper said that we was certain that all members of the Company were still alive.

"And, Kemper, I have just received my own call," Dana said, "after four times forty days wandering in the desert. Now there is one clear face and one clear voice for me, for a little while at least."

Dana had been in Prague either before or after this. Now he

came out of Ostrava to Sucha by a mountain way, and then turned northeast on the fringe of the mountains. These were the first and the last mountains of Poland, here on her southern border; from here the whole country is flat fields forever, Poland without boundaries.

Dana, who was tired and traveled and dirty, found a pond just before the mountains let loose. He stripped himself and washed his body and his green shirt with a block of soap that he always carried in his hat, along with candle stubs and other useful things. Then he stretched himself in the sun in what seemed almost a worshipping attitude. It wasn't; but he knew that both the body and the sun are sacramentals and may be treated as such.

There was tittering on the mountain behind him. "It's the young of the female kind," Dana said, "and I must dress and be away without shaming either party too much. There's a tone to that tittering that is like something to come home to, but it's a home I was never in before." The tone reminded him of Catherine Dembinska, of her lilt, and it was to her that he was coming home.

Dana walked, at a fast easy pace, and taking little more than four hours to it, the twenty miles into Krakow, which had once owned the name of Krakow Under the Mountains. The mountains had been closer to Krakow in earlier centuries. The Austrians, on their first coming to this region to occupy and to steal, had stolen a segment of these mountains and carried them away. That segment of the Polish mountains is now in the Austrian Tyrol. This is an authentic legend and more than a legend.

All right, into the rather large town then, and it a Friday evening ready to come on late. Dana was there by agreement, by promise, by call. But, on a practical level, how was Dana, who now misspoke Spanish and Italian and French and Flat German but who knew no Polish at all, going to find Catherine Dembinska, a revolutionary in a city where (he had been told) revolutionaries were being killed daily? He gazed at the steeples, the spires, the towers. He tried to figure out which street looked most like it would favor her with its direction.

"Oh come along, Dana," Catherine said. "You won't find me, this time, by looking at the steeples. I am worth many steeples."

They came together violently. They kissed so resoundingly that people gathered to look, and then to cheer. People whistled and laughed and clapped. Dana knew the chunky red heart of Poland then (it's a peculiar red color, like that of Polish beets, notice it sometime), and the heartening loudness. 'Ah, they're a mouthier

people even than the Irish,' Dana thought happily. He did not finish kissing Catherine, he adjourned it to a later moment. And certain persons came and shook his hand.

"Come along, Dana," Catherine said. "Oh, it doesn't matter where, just come along. Every place is wonderful tonight." Several houses were burning and nobody was putting the fires out. "We have to let them burn," Catherine said. "They are burned by official condemnation of people and property. Soon they will come and burn mine and perhaps me. Give us two weeks! Oh well, give us almost that long! Ah Dana, you were right to gaze at that one group of steeples. That is Lady Church where we will be married tomorrow. Only stylish people are married there."

This Catherine, the very ears on her were erotic!

"I am not stylish, Catherine. Let us find a poor people church."

"I joke, my Dana. This is a poor people church, and it is the jewel-box of Europe. Everybody is married in Lady Church. There are five weddings tomorrow and ours is central of them all. Are you tired? Are you hungry?"

"I will never be either again when I am with you. I'll embrace you openly in every street of Krakow. It is all the same to me where we go and what we do."

"What would you do this Friday night if you were home in Ireland?"

"There is a private proverb in my bay country that even the Saints in Heaven can find nothing better to do on a Friday night than to drink the good whisky and eat the long eels and sit on the lap of Aileen Dinneen. And, pardon me, but I believe the Saints in Heaven understand Aileen to be a type and forerunner of yourself."

"I think so too. We'd go openly to the openest place in Krakow and defy them all, as we have been defying them by our carrying-on in the streets. And yet I wish to live several days longer. Besides that, I know they can find better whisky and eels for us in one of the underground places."

The place they came to was underground literally, a cellar under another cellar, and they did not come to it by any direct route. They were inside houses and under streets; at one place they seemed to go through a sewer; they were in a place of a family so Austrian that they could not possibly be more so; they were down one level and then another one.

The whisky was really a brandy. Never mind, it was good brandy. The eels were not so long as the eels of Ireland, but they were good eels in their own way and somebody went to very much trouble to bring them to them. The lap was without equal,

as strong and neat as the fields of Poland. Like the Polish fields too it was without boundaries.

Oh, this was a conspirators' den though. The very rafters of the ceiling shouted old conspiracy and insurrection. The walls did not have ears. The walls were stone deaf. Even the giggling, the tittering, the laughter of Catherine that was so luscious and lively would not get through those walls.

There were twenty people in the place, no more than that. Everybody knew Catherine as a center person of their family, and everybody knew who Dana was. Dana had seen at least three of these men in Paris. Every person there had suffered death in his own family within the last twenty days, and every person seemed completely happy with this family affair in their midst. Dana did not understand all the jokes; some of them were translated for him into German, and some of them into French. Some of them could not be translated at all.

There was music on a sort of concertina. There was a regular procession of people going out for a while and then coming back bearing gifts. There was a sort of dancing, very intricate and very merry. Somebody brought a cake, and cheeses and confections. The wedding celebration would be before the wedding, due to the very unsettled state of affairs.

Catherine—even the back of her neck was erotic, even the backs of her knees, the joints of her wrists, the tip of her tongue. Her voice was nine-toned. It went on for quite a while.

"It is midnight now," Catherine said. "This is enough for Dana and me. It is the vigil of the sacrament for us now. Oh all my family, all my people, we will laugh again together someday, either here or in another place."

"And here is an older man with bad news for you, Catherine," Dana told his passion (even the nose on her face was enough to rouse a man), "and he doesn't know how to tell it."

"Your house is on fire, Panna Dembinska," he said. The whole low raftered room was silent for a moment, and Catherine looked as though she had been slapped. The older man who had brought the news stood in an agony of guilt. But all that was for a very short moment.

"Whoop, whose house isn't on fire these days!" a heavy lady shouted. "Catherine wouldn't want to be above us and have an unburned house."

"I am like the Irishman," Catherine laughed. "His hat blew off his head, or was it his head blew out from under his hat? The hat went bouncing down the street. It was kicked by a boy, it rolled in and out of a mud-bog, it was desecrated by a dog, it was crushed

to death by the wheels of a carriage into a pile of horse manure. 'I am only glad my head wasn't in it when it came to its untimely end,' the Irishman said. I am only glad that I wasn't in my house, or coming out of it. That is when the people are killed, coming out of their fired houses."

"Or going back to look at them," a man said sagely. "My own brother, as you know, was murdered the past week when he came to look at his own burning house."

"Nevertheless, Dana and myself *will* go to see my burning house," Catherine insisted. "Now. At once. Dana has never seen my house. How will he know who I really am if he has never seen my house? We go now to see everything that remains of it, to see every last possible wall and beam of it."

They came out into a street, not a street that Dana had seen before, not the street that they had gone in by, a horse alley really. There they had two riding horses from a *mietstall*, from a public stable there. In these livery stables there was always someone awake all night, or sleeping in the hay there and easily wakened. They had white horses, and it was a White night, very lightly wintered over. They rode across the Vistula (it was not a river there, it was only a stream) and up the hill to Wavel Castle. They turned on their horses there and looked out at the flat city across the little river.

"See it, Dana. It is myself, it is my overcoat, it is my very skin, it is my father and my mother. I have never seen it look prettier, though there was always a sort of flame to it. Now the roof is swaying and the beams are beginning to crash. In a little while it will be gone and nobody will ever see it again. But why do I say that? Of course it will be seen again. Good houses like good people are raised again on the last day and clothed in their same bodies."

"I count thirteen houses burning, Catherine. Wh—?"

"Hush up, Dana. If you ask 'which?' I will pull the tongue out of your head and mangle it. Of course you know which house is mine. It is the one that looks exactly like me."

Yes, there was a burning house that looked like Catherine. Dana hadn't expected it to be so large a house or he would have known immediately which it was. The fine eyes of Dana could pick out every detail of it, each facet as it crowned in flame and tumbled in. Catherine's own high window exploded outward in globs of hot glass, the little turrets fell down, and the roofs rippled like waves. Catherine had danced on all those high roofs in her childhood and in her womanhood too. Walls peeled away like burning wreaths. Then it was all down except certain stone chimneys that stood and stifled.

Catherine laughed, a rather brittle laugh for her.

"It's gone, Dana. Now you are my house and I will live in you. Dana, why did you never learn to ride? Are there no horses in Ireland?" And she wheeled and skidded her horse so violently that it struck sparks from the rocks.

Dana was very nearly a perfect rider, but Catherine was far ahead of him, going down Castle Hill. Dana had the better horse and he melted into it and surged the animal. But Catherine was like a circus girl, out of the saddle, dancing on the horse's rump, touching quick feet to ground and coming up again. When Dana came up to her she swerved and leaped, knocked him off his horse, and they rolled over and over together in the thin fluffy snow.

"Ah, we have lost the horses and they're hired ones," Dana said. "We should have had more care of the thing."

"Dana, my boy, is it a log I am marrying? What matters one hundred horses? You are with *Catherine*."

He sat on her and stuffed her bosom full of snow for abusing the horses. Running and leaping then, they followed the horses halfway to Skawina. They saw white against white and whistled, and the horses came back to them, ready to be ridden home.

Catherine seemed gay. She sang ditties like nursery rhymes in Polish and French and English.

*"Quickly, lamp-man, light the sun.
Eleven days left till all is done."*

And suddenly she asked Dana "Are you in grace?"

"I am," he said.

"Wait here, then," she said. "I'll go on across the river with the two horses and bring them to the stable. And then I will do other things. My wedding gown is burned up now. I will be borrowing one. The lamp-man is lighting the sun right now and you will see it in ten minutes. Wait an hour here, no more. Watch over the city from here lest someone steal it away. Our mass is the third of the early morning. My head is priced in my own town so we do these things a little quietly. When you come, come through the market and into the side door of Lady Church."

Dana Coscuin waited an hour, no more. He watched over the city lest someone should steal it away. The sun came up and Dana regarded him fiercely. "Remember that it is only a rhyme," Dana told that sacramental orb. "We will have many times eleven days before it is all done."

Dana crossed the little Vistula into Krakow. He was lost for a while in unfamiliar streets and he was late. He came through the

market and into the side door of Lady Church. His own wedding mass had begun but it was not yet the offertory. He joined Catherine. "Late for your own wedding," she whispered happily, and he was not sure but what she put the tip of her tongue in his ear. She pinched him till blood came. Even her strong nails were erotic.

She hadn't a wedding gown. She had a dress of the peasant style. It wasn't a nuptial mass; it was a quick low mass. But they were married tightly and to death. The mass was over, and they went out through the side door of Lady Church into the market.

Another couple was waiting there. Everybody wanted to get married in Lady Church, but it was not now done conspicuously. Dana kissed the waiting bride there in the market, and Catherine kissed the groom. Dana had seen neither of them before; he didn't know whether Catherine had.

This was the last Saturday of November of 1848 that Dana Coscuin and Catherine Dembinska were married in Krakow. They hadn't a house, they hadn't anything.

"You can turn me in for the price on my head, Dana," she said. "It's considerable."

"Shall it be alive or dead? Shall I bring your ears to them, or shall I bring your whole body? I could likely get enough for you to buy three more women."

"We will have to stay in a different house every day and every night," she said. "We will look, every now and then, to see if there is any light at the end of the tunnel. I don't believe there will be. It won't matter, really. This house here is as good as any, Dana. In a moment you will see the terrified look on the faces of two very good persons when they realize that we mean to stay with them this day, and that our staying may bring the police and the soldiery on them, or even fire on their house. They know me. They even love me a little. And they are truly good. Watch their faces, though, Dana. It will be sheer delight."

Well, the faces of them (it was an Austrian couple and not a Polish couple who lived in that house) did turn as green as Dana's shirt. But that was only for a little while. They were terrified, but they were even more compassionate. In a bit they also became brave and merry, for Catherine was infectious. They gave to Dana and Catherine the main rooms of their house for as long as they would be there, and themselves withdrew to some rear quarters.

This was the beginning of the marriage of Dana and Catherine, the happiest marriage that has ever been upon this earth. No, it is no use, nobody will be able to call to mind a happier one. None of the famous and storied lovers, no; they all lived snappish lives

together. None of the great ones, none of the little ones. Nothing like this ever, not before, not since.

Some might say that the married saints, Stephen and Gisela, were as happy in their own time. Likely they weren't. They had very much, but they hadn't the glad garnish of the Coscuins. They hadn't the horsemanship, they hadn't the fencing, they hadn't the opera, they hadn't the mountains behind Krakow nor the plains before. They hadn't either bohemians or Bohemians to carouse at night with, they hadn't the Green Conspiracy, nor the sense of storm.

Even in their carnal congress Dana and Catherine were certainly unusual. Was ever anyone so vivid and violent? There is an old and unchaste legend of a giant and giantess in Ireland who may have set all records, if the thing may be believed. The giant is said to have had inexhaustible passion and an instrument nine *slata* long. And the giantess—but those are only grotesqueries. Dana and Catherine were humanly accoutered. Both were of extraordinary physical liveliness, however, and of more than usual vigor and stamina.

This was the Dana who was the strongest fast man from the whole west-bays area of Ireland. This was the Catherine who danced on high roof gables and rode horses as a circus girl might. And they had been given, as special award, an overrunning gaiety and apperception and awareness. Moreover, they were in love, they were in passion, they were in grace.

This was another high hilarity, exceeding the hilarities of blood and death which are not sacramentals in the same sense as this.

*"Scrub, and dress in the gladsome rag.
Eight days left in the bag-man's bag,"*

Catherine sang one early evening. She was carrying bucket after bucket of hot water up from the stove to the round high-backed tub of gray granite that was a feature of this rich house. (This was not the first house they stayed in; it was the second or third.) Catherine took baths every two or three days, to the amusement of Dana. This was the night they went to the opera, and they did go in gladsome rags.

Can you imagine Dana done out in topper and monocle? Rough Brume would have flung the one-time jibe back at him if he could have seen him now. They went like a high Prussian couple, and who would recognize them so? Dana was far from adept in German, but he had picked up a hundred phrases and he was a perfect mimic in voice and bearing.

The opera was *Rienzi*.

"I wonder if they would let me play one of the fiddles?" Dana asked Catherine after the thing had gone on for a little while.

"Oh no no," Catherine forbade.

"Oh, I could go along with the tunes and surely add something to them. It seems a little lacking, and you have never heard me play the fiddle. That third fiddle-man is clearly bored and he isn't doing his part. I believe he would be glad to let me—"

"Oh no no. And yet, Dana, it would set them by the ears, and it appeals to me so—Oh no no no, Dana, it may not be."

A lady of Catherine's acquaintance talked to them in the entrance concourse in an interval between the acts.

"I don't know if you remember him, Catherine, but Ifreann Chortovitch, that loutish grotesque man, is dead in Russia," she said.

"No. Ifreann isn't dead," Dana said offhandedly.

"No, he isn't. We would know it if he were," Catherine said.

"Well, that is the report," the lady told them. "It may be that he will make a lie of the report. It is said that he is really a were-cat and that he will have several lives and deaths. There were so many strange things about him in his younger years."

"Tell me how strange," Dana said. "I know him. In some ways I know him very well. But there are things about him that I cannot seem to know."

"Well, shortly after he was born, he had suddenly been huge, monstrous," the lady said. "When he was two years old he was as large as a boy of twelve, and he talked like one."

"And he is really quite young?"

"Impossibly young for his appearance. And wrong. In almost every way he is wrong."

Dana and Catherine did not get to see the end of the opera. After another act, a man whispered to them that they should leave, for their safety and their lives. They should not leave by the big entry doors, though, but by a side door which he showed them. They left that way.

They picked their way through dark streets. And they came out of their thin disguises. Catherine, with a whispering laugh, suddenly shed all her gladsome rags from top to toe. She wrapped herself in a horse blanket (and the horse rolled big questioning eyes at her) and slipped along barefoot in the thin snow. Dana sailed his topper one way and his monocle another. They entered a dark house, not the house they had come out of that evening.

They were all Polish people in that house and they talked for some hours. The insurrection was over with for that year, as far as Poland was concerned; only the attrition remained.

The only real battles had been waged by the forces of Louis Mieroslawski and they had been mostly in the Prussian sector. Although they had several splendid victories, these Polish were not able to contend long with regular Prussian units that knew their every intention and move.

In Russian or Crown Poland, the Cossacks had simply come in in very great numbers and occupied everything; they also had been informed of every contemplated move. In Austrian Poland (there really wasn't much to Austrian Poland except the one large town of Krakow and a little bit of countryside), the occupying armies had the best information of all; all the plotting and insurrection had originated in Krakow, and it had all been betrayed from there.

And all the leaders had been knocked off, dozen by dozen and one by one. And the heads of those who remained were priced.

"Another year, or two, or five," one of the men said, "then we will try it again, only more carefully and with no possibility of treason. It will take several seasons to grow back our lost blood."

"It is so much like Ireland that it makes me homesick," Dana said. "'And with no possibility of treason!' Indeed."

Catherine was a little bit doctrinaire that evening, as she had not been lately. She believed that the Green Revolution was still growing apace. And she believed that the Red Revolution, for all that it had thrown in with the ancient tyrannies here (as it will do every time) to forestall the Green locally, was yet coming onto lean days. The withering thing had itself begun to wither.

"Everywhere, over all, it is better and greener at the end of this year than it was at the beginning. The people have more than they had before. They even learn, for all their threshing around, a little bit what to do with what they have.

"And we have done such as we have with great disadvantages and impediments. We are compelled to truth, and they are not. We are constrained from unreasonable murder, and they are not. Oh, it would be wonderful to combat them," (Catherine had a rather devilish brightness in her eyes at this moment), "for a while, with all the rules abjured."

"The land is too much forgotten," a morbid man said. "Both sorts of revolutionaries think only of the cities and the industries and the industry workers."

"Oh, the land will be forgotten more and more," Catherine said. "What is the novelty about land? It will be forgotten for a hundred years and more. And then one day the people will wake up in panic and ask 'What ever happened to the land?'"

One evening Dana and Catherine were in the company of

bohemian people, arty people, philosophical people, futuristic people, literary people, musical people of the several races of Krakow, and some of them truly seemed to be of no race at all. They held near as intelligent talk as may be heard in the back-bays cottages of Ireland. Only the names and the notions were different. The spirit was the same. And the spirits, though different, were equivalent. One man's whisky is another man's cognac.

Dana learned with some surprise that the shambling chunky-faced Balzac who used to walk about Paris in a sort of absentmindedness was the greatest writer in the world. He heard that the hairy Marx who wrote for English journals from Paris actually had adherents, that his third sort of Communism might outlast the other two sorts.

He heard that folk art might come back. "Who but folks have art?" he asked artlessly. "The goats and the crows do not produce anything beyond song, and the *pooka* and the *sioga* are on the level with children. If not art of the folk themselves, then of whom?"

Dana learned that night who the greatest poet in the world was. He was a young Russian man who was present in that very room. The greatest painter in the world was also present, a slightly older man and a native of Krakow. The greatest sculptor in the world was likewise with them. He was one of the men who seemed without a clear race or nationality; he had worked on monuments in nearly every city of Europe.

"It just seems as though I should be the best in the world at something," Dana said. "Everybody else here is."

"You are, Dana," said an older lady from Prague. "I haven't the name of your particular art, but you are the best in the world at it."

It was not anything there that you could hold in your hands to put into words, but it was an especially pleasant and stimulating and raffish night, one to be remembered in other years and places.

They rode out one day on horses, rode for nearly twenty hours, changing horses twice at town stables; they made a circuit of close on one hundred miles. They rode all north of Krakow on the eternal plains. The whole thing and character of these plains was that they were boundless. A boundless thing has a different texture from a bounded, however much you say they are composed of the same things. It was still only a very scanty snow in the country, and it seemed that Dana and Catherine could not get enough of riding.

Catherine sang. She sang constantly now, all sorts of songs, and she was her own orchestration. Nobody, not even Aileen in Ireland, had a more varied voice. They had come by a frozen fountain in a winter-white park. Triton did have an icicle hanging from his nose.

They fenced one day. Catherine had acquired a beautiful pair of matched rapiers. This was none of the business of the foils that have buttons on the ends. These were blood-rapiers.

"It will not hurt that we let a little blood, Dana," she grinned wickedly. "We both have so much blood in us nowadays that we will burst."

They fenced in the cellar of a house, the last house, as it happened, that they would occupy in Krakow. They had moved from house to house several times so that their hosts would not have the roofs burned over them on account of such guests.

They fenced easily and agilely, barefoot on the earthen floor, both stripped to the waist. There was no toying with Catherine; she was too quick and too skilled for that. It really seemed as if she would run Dana through. She drew first blood, and second, and third.

"Use them when you come to it," she said once when they stopped to breathe. "Use this very pair. There is no way you can win with him with any other paired weapons."

"Win with whom, Catherine?" But she slashed him, and they were at it again. Dana drew blood on Catherine. She was statuesque, scarlet on ivory now. Her throat, her bosom were statued perfection, firm beyond believing, and Dana added deep rich color to them. That man the other night was not the greatest sculptor in the world: he, Dana Coscuin, was the greatest, and he added incredibly deft touches to the greatest living statue.

With any other couple there would be something a little wrong about this. With them, in their private passion, there was not. Catherine stuck her tongue out impishly, and Dana flicked it with his rapier's point, starting a fine red ribbon.

"My initials are on you there," Catherine said when they were finished. She spoke a little slurred from her nicked tongue. This is the way Dana would remember her voice. "On your thorax," she said. "They will scar and be there forever."

"Some characters are there and they will scar, but are they your initials?"

"Yes. I am Polish Katherine with a K."

There is, in the neighborhood of Czestochowa, a vivid Polish

statue of a bloodied woman in pain and delight. This is sometimes called The Martyrdom of Saint Barbara and sometimes Our Lady of the Barbarians, but both names are suspect. Catherine looked like that statue.

It was that night that a man came and told Catherine that the price had been taken off her head. Catherine had good and powerful friends among the Krakow Austrians and their intercession for her had been effective. And Catherine's own striking beauty had had something to do with this. Austrians, especially those of the military and official sort, are often stricken by such. They have both a love and a sentimentality for beauty.

"If we start for Amsterdam tomorrow we could easily be there by the first day of the new year," Dana said.

"All right. We will start tomorrow night then, either both of us or one of us."

"What do you mean 'both of us or one of us'?"

But Catherine, that night, was carrying water for one of those baths of hers, to an iron tub this time. She was singing like a child, and, as often happened lately, she ended up on one of her number-day songs:

*"All of our hope on the green-faced clown.
One more day till the sky fall down."*

Then she cried in the oddest voice that Dana had ever heard her use: "Oh! It falls down so sudden on one!"

Then, in the early morning, it was the passionate sacrament.

After this, they went out and to one of the smaller churches where Dana had never been, to a dawn mass; it was again the passionate sacrament with now all its fuller dimensions and aspects.

They parted after that for a few hours. Catherine went to dispose of various belongings that were kept by different friends. She was making and executing her will by sudden and impulsive donations as she rounded the city.

Dana went to terminate various pieces of business and to see about travel. He wished to go grand with his bride-wife, by carriage, by railway where such obtained, or by fine mount. Likely Catherine had slept on the bare earth near as much as he had, but it should not be so this journey.

They would go to Amsterdam because their whole company had intuitive appointment there on the first day of the year. That might be the gateway to the proposition that the world is larger than Europe, and that the growing green wave was in need of

them to spread it. Their direction, which had always been present, though with infuriating gaps and frustrating silences, was directing them to that place and time. They would go there.

It had come on pleasantly and bitterly cold. Dana was as happy as he had ever been in his life.

Then it shattered, suddenly, completely.

Dana stood dazed in the street. He began to tremble. He discovered that he was crying. He began to run towards the house, the last house that they occupied in Krakow.

"Oh, it falls down so sudden on one!" Catherine had moaned the night before.

In blind panic, Dana knew that it was over with. A curl of smoke came out, and the door was shattered down as by a mad bear.

In the smoke-filled room Catherine was dead on her back. Horribly, unnaturally dead, completely broken and splattered, crushed and mutilated, red and black with her own blood, swollen and deformed. "Yes, Dana, I will kill that girl. You know it," a monster had said once.

Dana cried out loud, like the Irishman he was, like the Polishman he had lately become. He wailed and choked. Nothing of dignity. This was death and the Devil.

Dana lay upon Catherine's body. Death could not end that love, but the monstrous death had ended everything else. He took a bone sliver that jagged out of her crushed head. "Not my head as Jane Blaye keeps that of her husband, Dana. Some lesser bone or bone splinter will do," Catherine had said once. He rose up. He wrapped the bone splinter in a kerchief and placed it in the pouch inside his shirt as if it were the relic of a saint. It was.

A writing in the great hand of Ifreann was stabbed to the wall with a hand knife. Already the flames along the wall were flicking it, and Dana let it burn. "I'll not read your vaunt," he said. He made out only the signature, Ifreann Chortovitch, the Son of the Devil. Then it was all gone in the fire.

Dana took the beautiful pair of matched rapiers in their case. He took nothing else at all. He went out of the burning house, not answering the people who were coming to the trouble, not even answering the owners of the house who had been so kind to Catherine and to himself.

It was a little after noon. Dana went quickly through the town on foot, over a little bridge that spanned the little Vistula, south and west on the way towards Skawina and the mountains beyond.

Dana picked it up almost as soon as he was in the open country, in that monster's own country. What does a tracked Devil smell

like? It is undeniable that he has a strong animal smell when he is pursued or at bay.

A little like a bear, a musk-mad bear. A little like a wolverine, which continental Europeans call the glutton, which is also called the son of the Devil. A little like an ape. Very strong and rampant.

Dana knew nothing and everything about the creature he tracked. It had become a creature to him now and not a man. That it was not a normal man was clear. Even that it was a madman would leave much unexplained. It was an animal plainly (who is not?), but animal to an excessive degree. It was ghost and devil, it was monstrous hybrid. It was, according to the stories of all those who knew it earliest, a hulk of no more than eighteen years old that had the appearance of a man twice that age. Boy monster! Aw hell! Och Ifreann!

It was a man-magnet, and it was drawing the man Dana over the miles now. Yet it had been genuinely the heartiest creature ever. Its sweeping offer 'It is I and thou, Dana, and the wonderful blood in the gutters' had been made in towering friendliness. To kill the girl was something ordained to it from the beginning.

Dana had had more encounters with the Ifreann in dreams than in the waking world. He had seen the creature clearly in a daytime dream when he read its first letter: the mouth too big for the face, the almost purplish face too big for the head, the head too big for any body, the body too big for any thing.

Dana traveled with the untiring jog that he had learned from Brume. The fine rapiers in their case were not really a-rattle; they were a-whisper. The case was green velvet within, rather rich.

The Ifreann could not have been a great distance ahead. Its track was strong, repugnant, overwhelming, the concentrated forced stench of a zoo animal. Ifreann was a zoo animal on earth.

The Ifreann would not jog or bounce along. When it went rapidly it always went with a huge stride that was really a stagger. Dana found its tremendous tracks sometimes in slush runs in open fields. He had almost expected the tracks to be cloven, and there was something unusual about them. Whatever was the Ifreann wearing on its ungainly feet this day?

"What thou doest do quickly."

As quickly as possible. No more than four hours, perhaps twenty-five miles. Dana was onto the broken toes of the mountains now. The Ifreann was not a mountain creature and Dana knew it would not retreat too deeply beyond these first hills. It had warmed in that afternoon and much of the snow had turned to slush as it came nearer to sundown. A winter raven came out of the hills, cawed and talked to Dana, and seemed ready

to lead him to his prey.

Dana topped a south-west running ridge and came to a higher one. "Oudzie, oudzie," the raven caw-hissed as its wings whistled in the air, "over there, over there." And there was the Ifreann, standing on a chalky ledge only a little above Dana.

"Dana my love, my life, we spill a little blood here and it may be possible that one of us will die. I will mourn for you. I will mourn even more for myself. Have at me, boy! With your weapons or mine?"

Dana did not answer, but he uncased the rapiers and slung one of them up, end over end to the Ifreann. And Ifreann caught it neatly. It seemed almost a toy in his big hand.

The Ifreann stood on a chalky ledge topped with slushy snow. The ledge was about shoulder high to Dana as he came up to the battle. Now here was the difficulty: Ifreann wore the heaviest and tallest jack boots ever seen. It was these that had made the unusual tracks. They were very heavy polished leather, like iron. A rapier thrust, angling up as it must, would slice or pierce them very little. Indeed Ifreann was pretty thoroughly encased in heavy leather. It would be a hard go to score on him at all.

But it was not at all hard for the monster to score on Dana; it began to cut him to pieces. Dana was in too much of a fury to back off, and there would be little left of him in a bit. He parried skillfully and daringly, but the battle was all against him. "*Nie jeszcze*, not yet," the raved cawed.

"If not yet, then when will it be?" Dana demanded. But he saw it now, as the raven had seen it, and he eased off a little, drawing back from the deathly point of Ifreann, making Ifreann reach for him more and more. And more.

The devil is an unnatural creature, and he will miss little points about nature.

He will not notice intimate details about chalk rock; he will not understand the effect of snow and slush and sudden pressure on it. He will not know at quite what point it will crumble. But Dana knew chalk and snow.

A little more to the left. Entice the creature into shifting a giant foot a little more. Entice it into reaching a little further. Pray that the chalk will act like chalk and crumble to proper stress.

"*Prendko, prendko*, quickly, quickly!" the winter raven screamed, and Dana was onto the split second when the chalk ledge crumbled under the heavy forward-shifting foot of Ifreann. The big creature slipped on one foot and came down within reach, and Dana drove the rapier point under the leather lorica or breast shield. The big creature came all the way down, and the point

went all the way through, protruding from the back. Ifreann lay at Dana's feet now. He rattled in his throat, he gushed dark blood, he twitched; then he was silent and motionless.

It was the moment of sundown and it darkened perceptively in that single instant.

Dana turned away in horror and stumbled down the slope. A changed stench had indicated a changed state in the monster, and Dana took it for death.

"Oh my God, let it be that I will never kill again! Let someone else be called to it."

Red monster-blood soaking into green moss that had been uncovered of its snow in the scuffling! Dana was away from there, away from there anywhere, in the almost dark now, in the woods and the short hills, striking out west and south, stricken and retching. The raven came after him, excited, almost frantic, flailing wings and cawing in flopping excitement. "He is not dead, he is not dead!"

"Ah, God knows the monster is dead by my hand," Dana swore. "Leave me, bird."

A simple-looking country man was driving two heifers along a path that divided the plains from the hills. He looked at Dana as though he recognized him. He ran to him in the half light and pressed something into his hand.

"From the Count Cyril Prasinos," the simple-looking man said. It was the reward and the wages. It was a copper penny.